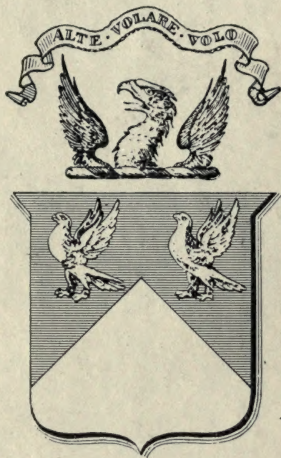




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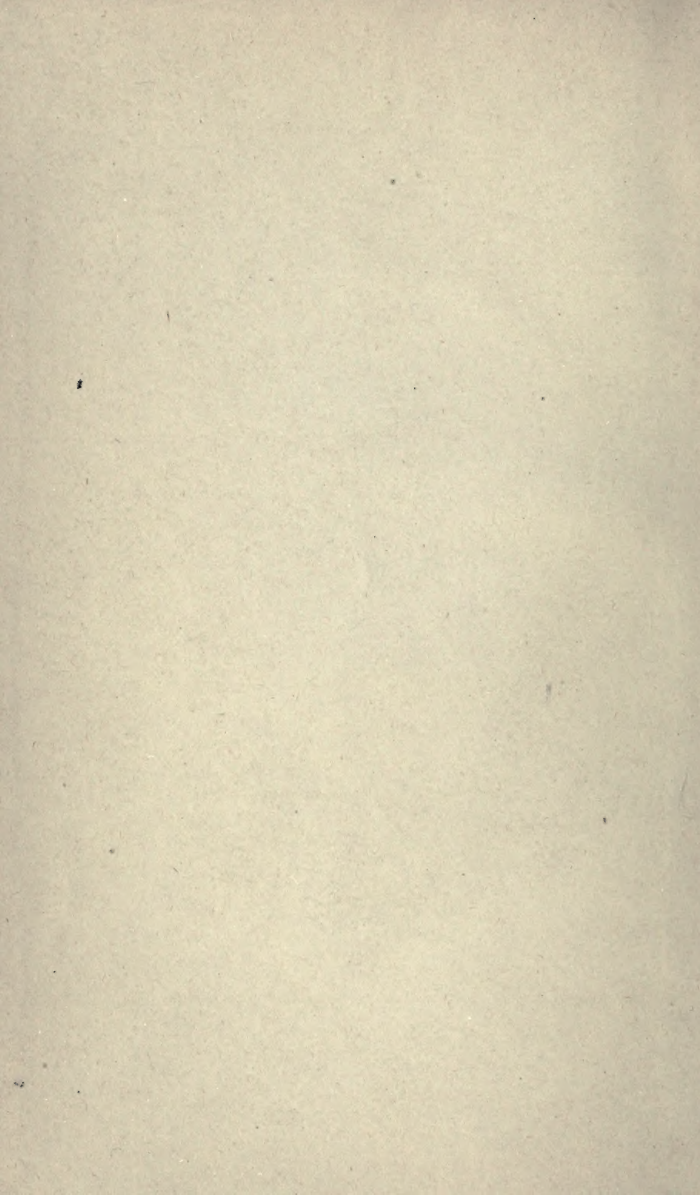
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AN INTRODUCTION  
TO  
ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY  
HENRY S. PANCOAST  
*Instructor in English Literature in the De Lancey School  
Philadelphia*



NEW YORK  
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1895

AN INTRODUCTION  
TO  
THE STUDY OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE  
BY  
HENRY MURSE STEPHENS

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## PREFACE

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THIS book is based upon a previous one, *Representative English Literature*, which I have enlarged in some directions and curtailed in others, in order to adapt it to somewhat different requirements. In the former book a series of English masterpieces was given in a general setting of critical and historical comment; the development of the literature being thus shown with the aid of representative extracts illustrative of the successive literary epochs. Subsequent experience has strengthened my confidence in the soundness of the principle on which that book was prepared, and for those who have not easy access to books, or who cannot conveniently obtain a number of separate works for class use, the insertion of the suggested selections is clearly an advantage. On the other hand, some teachers may wish to use the historical and critical portions of such a book, without being restricted to prescribed selections. It is in the hope of meeting the needs of teachers of the latter class, and of more advanced students, that the present manual has been prepared. To this end I have added some two hundred pages of entirely new matter, omitting all the selections and notes included in the former work. The text has thus been nearly doubled in length, and the book, as a whole, brought within

slightly smaller limits. It has still been my object to send the student directly to the literature itself, but here I have merely suggested in reading lists the selected works, giving them in some instances with general hints for study. The book is intended to be subordinate and supplementary to this, or some similar, course of study; and the text is often made a commentary, more or less direct, on the works given in the reading list which follows. I have tried to respect that freedom and individuality on the part of the teacher which I believe so essential to the best results, and I hope the book will be found adapted to other courses of study than those which I have given. It is not, of course, expected that in any case the class will read all the works suggested, but the lists and references have been made comparatively full in order to afford a greater liberty of choice.

I have said that it has been my ambition to write an introduction to English literature—a book which shall occupy a useful, but strictly subordinate place. It is still my conviction that a history of English literature and a working hand-book, such as this aims to be, are two radically different things. The first aims to trace the growth and progress of a literature with the primary purpose of unfolding and explaining the law and nature of its development. The second, while it has indeed this object, should have also another. It is primarily addressed to students, and its treatment of literary history should be to a considerable extent determined and modified to meet their special needs. It should of course endeavor to give a true historic perspective, but

at the same time it should, as far as is consistent with this, give the largest space to those writers which it is most important for the student to study. Thus the comedies of the Restoration drama have an unquestioned rank, and a very positive historic significance; no history of the literature could properly slight them, but as they could not be read in any preparatory school, a manual of literature may safely pass them over with the briefest mention. Other books, again, may fall outside the limits by reason of their length and difficulty. In a text-book the intrinsic value or historic importance of Bacon's *Novum Organum*, or Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, is by no means the single consideration, and in general we may profitably remember, to use Lowell's illustration, that many famous books, like certain Bills introduced into Congress, are merely "read by their titles and passed." It is quite true that such a principle of exclusion may become dangerous if injudiciously applied; but its danger is insignificant beside the danger of compelling the student to learn by rote set criticisms on books he is forbidden to read, or unable to understand. The true object of a text-book is not to give the student a fictitious acquaintance with the works he cannot read, but to bring him into direct and sympathetic contact with those books he should learn to read and appreciate. Moreover the omission of a large number of standard authors is rendered imperative by two unavoidable conditions, the limited time at the command of the student, and the limited space at the disposal of the writer. For this reason, if for



no other, the text-book of literature must follow a principle of its own. If it attempts to be a mere history of literature in miniature, authors' names, dates, and titles will remain a dry insoluble residuum from which all that is helpful and vital has departed. I have accordingly tried to conform to the conditions under which I have worked, and the purpose I have had in view. I have omitted, as formerly, many writers of unquestioned standing that I might place before the student a few great authors and their works with comparative vividness and fullness. In the attempt to carry out such a method troublesome questions of judgment perpetually present themselves, and if I seem to have omitted what should have been included, or included what should have been omitted, I can only remind my critics of the extreme difficulty of the task.

As the following works will be found useful in connection with the entire course of study they are given here in preference to inserting them in the study list of any special period.

#### GENERAL NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. *History*.—Green's *History of the English People* will be found invaluable. Teachers are recommended to use this book freely, and to read, with the class, passages relating to literature or to social conditions. Knight's *Pictorial History of England*, Craik and Macfarlane's *History of England*.

2. *Literature*.—Stopford Brooke's *Primer of English Literature*. Taine's *English Literature* is a classic, and is brilliant and suggestive; it should be

used, however, with due allowance for its author's peculiar theories and for critical shortcomings. Howitt's *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets*, Hutton's *Literary Landmarks of London*, Hare's *Walks About London*, Baedeker's *Great Britain*. For selections, Ward's *English Poets*, Chambers' *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, Cook's *Selections from English Prose*, Cassell's *Library of English Literature*, edited by Morley. For reference, Rylands' *Chronological Outlines of English Literature*, Phillips' *Popular Manual of English Literature*, Adams' *Dictionary of English Literature*, Brewer's *Reader's Handbook*, Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, Ploetz's *Epitome of Universal History*. For study lists, Welsh's *English Masterpiece Course*, Winchester's *Short Course of Reading*, Hodgkin's *Nineteenth Century Authors*.

The reproduction of the map of Shakespeare's London has been obtained through the kindness of the Philadelphia Library, and I gladly take this opportunity of thanking those connected with that institution for this and many other courtesies.

H. S. P.

GERMANTOWN, *July 23, 1894.*





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# AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

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## INTRODUCTION

### I.—WHAT LITERATURE IS

THE word literature is used in two distinct senses :

(a) Its first and literal meaning is—something written, from the Latin, *littera*, a letter of the alphabet, an inscription, a writing, a manuscript, a book, etc. In this general sense the literature of a nation includes all the books it has produced, without respect to subject or excellence.

(b) By literature, in its secondary and more restricted sense, we mean one especial kind of written composition, the character of which may be indicated but not strictly defined. Works of literature, in this narrower sense, aim to please, to awaken thought, feeling, or imagination, rather than to instruct : they are addressed to no special class of readers, and they possess an excellence of expression which entitles them to rank as works of art. Like painting, music, or sculpture, literature is concerned mainly with feelings, and, in this, is distinguished from the books of knowledge, or science, whose first object is

to teach facts.\* Much that is literature in the strictest sense does deal with facts, whether of history or of science, but it uses these facts to arouse the feelings or to please the imagination. It takes them out of a special department of knowledge and makes them of universal interest, and it expresses them in a form of permanent beauty or value. Shakespeare's historical plays, Carlyle's *French Revolution*, or an essay of De Quincey or Macaulay, while they tell us facts, fulfill these conditions, and are strictly literature; and, in general, poetry, history, biographies, novels, essays, and the like, may be included in this class. It is in this stricter sense that we shall hereafter use the word.

Literature is occupied chiefly with the great elementary feelings and passions which are a necessary part of human nature. Such feelings as worship, love, hate, fear, ambition, remorse, jealousy, are common to man, and, through them, men separated by education or surroundings are able to sympathize with or understand each other. Literature, expressing and appealing to such feelings, shares in their permanence and universality. In the poetry of the Persian 'Omar Khayyám, of the Greek Anacreon, of

**The permanence and universality of literature.**

\* "To ascertain and communicate facts is the object of science; to quicken our life into a higher consciousness through the feelings is the function of art."—"The Scientific Movement and Literature," in *Studies in Literature*, p. 85, by Edward Dowden. This distinction between literature and science was laid down in a famous passage of De Quincey: "There is first, the literature of *knowledge* (*i. e.*, science), and

the Roman Horace, and of the English Robert Herrick, we find the same familiar mood. Each is troubled by the pathetic shortness of human life, each shrinks from the thought of death and tries to dispel it with the half-despairing resolve to enjoy life while it lasts. Neither time nor place prevents us from entering into the work of each of these poets, in many respects so widely separated, because they express alike a common human feeling, which we can understand through imagination or experience. So the *Antigone* of Sophocles and the *King Lear* of Shakespeare treat of the same elementary feeling, the love between parent and child, and, while that feeling lasts, those immortal portrayals of it will be admired and understood.

Finally, works of literature have a beauty, power, and individuality of expression which helps to make them both permanent and universal.

Not only is there a value in the thought or feelings contained in a literary masterpiece, there is a distinct and added value in the special form in which thought and feeling have been embodied. Each great writer has his own style or manner, his characteristic way of addressing us. This style is the expression of his personal charac-

Literary  
style.

secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is to *teach*; the function of the second is to *move*. The first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but *always through* affections of pleasure or sympathy." V. this whole passage in the essay on *Alexander Pope*.

ter ; we learn to know him by it, as we recognize a man by his gait or by the tones of his voice. This personal element is another distinguishing feature of literature, and further separates it from science.

Through his books a great writer expresses a part of his inner self. He is impelled to give us, as best

The study  
of English  
literature.

he can through written words, the most that he has gained by his experience. In the poet's verse we read the lesson he has learned from living ; it is warm and alive for all time with his sorrows, exaltations, hopes, or despairs. Literature is born of life, and it is in this sense that Milton calls a good book "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."\*

Thus we learn to look on the works of each great writer as an actual part of a human life, mysteriously preserved and communicated to us. But we must go farther and realize that each nation as well as each individual has a distinct character and a continuous inner life ; that, in generation after generation, men and women have lived who have embodied in literature not their own souls merely, but some deep thought or feeling of their time and nation. Often thousands feel dumbly what the great writer alone is able to express. Accordingly literature is not merely *personal*, but *national*. The character of a nation manifested through action we commonly call its *history* ; the character of a nation written down in its books, or throbbing in its dramas, songs, and ballads, we call its *literature*. For more than

\* Milton's *Areopagitica*.



twelve hundred years the English people has been revealing its life, and its way of looking at life, through its books ; to study English literature is, therefore, to study one great expression of the character and historic development of the English race.

## II.—THE GREAT DIVISIONS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

When we look at this life of the English race as expressed in literature through more than twelve centuries, we find that it possesses marked characteristics at certain periods. For centuries the mind of England is stimulated and influenced by a foreign civilization. The nation and its literature, like the individual life, pass through moods of faith and passion, of frivolity and unbelief. English literature, reflecting or expressing these varied influences or changing moods, naturally divides itself into the following four great periods of development :

1. *The Period of Preparation ; 670 to about 1400.*
2. *The Period of Italian Influence ; about 1400 to 1660.*
3. *The Period of French Influence ; 1660 to about 1750.*
4. *The Modern English Period ; since about 1750.*

These divisions must be broadly laid down at the start, although their meaning will become plainer as we advance.

## I.—THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION. FROM 670 TO ABOUT 1400

During this period England made for her use a national language. During this time, also, the vari-

ous races and tribes whose intermixture makes the modern English became substantially one people.

In order to have a great national literature it is necessary to have a great national language. Such a language England did not always possess. The settlement of the island by different races or tribes, each having a different speech or dialect, made England for centuries a land of confusion of tongues. The Norman Conquest (1066) brought for a time another element of confusion by the introduction of French. During the fourteenth century the language spoken in and about London, a form of English largely mixed with French, asserted its supremacy. This English became more and more generally established, and from it the language we speak to-day, however enlarged or modified, is directly derived. The centuries during which England was forming her national speech stand by themselves in the history of her literature. Like a child she struggles with the difficulties of language. Some write in one or another kind of English, some in Latin, some in French. By the end of the fourteenth century this difficulty is conquered; we pass out of the centuries of preparation into those of greater literary expression.

## II.—THE PERIOD OF ITALIAN INFLUENCE. FROM ABOUT 1400 TO 1660

Toward the end of the fourteenth century the mind of England began to be greatly stimulated and directed by an influence from without. England began to share in the *Renaissance*, or the awakening of the mind of Europe to a new culture, a fresh

delight in life and in beauty, a new enthusiasm for freedom in thought and action. This great movement first took shape in Italy. Nation after nation kindled with the ardor of the new spirit, and England, like the rest, drew from Italy knowledge and inspiration. Education in England was transformed by men who learned in Florence or Bologna what they taught at Oxford or at Cambridge, until the *New Learning* and the new spirit found their unrivaled literary expression in the reigns of Elizabeth and James (1558-1625).

### III.—THE PERIOD OF FRENCH INFLUENCE. FROM 1660 TO ABOUT 1750

After the new thoughts and mighty passions that came with the Renaissance had spent their force, England seemed for the time to have grown tired of great feelings either in poetry or in religion. She became scientific, intellectual, cold, and inclined to attach undue importance to the style or manner of writing, thinking that great works were produced by study and art rather than by the inspiration of genius. This tendency was encouraged, or perhaps originated, by the example and influence of the French. This was during the brilliant reign of Louis XIV., when such writers as Molière, Racine, Corneille, and Boileau, were making French literature and literary standards fashionable in Europe. Charles II. ascended the throne in 1660, after his youth of exile on the Continent, bringing with him a liking for things French, and for a while some English writers tried to compose according to the prescription laid down

by Boileau and his followers. France, however, exerted no such profound and lasting influence on English literature and thought as had been exercised by Italy during the period preceding. The germinating power of Italian life and culture reached far beyond the confines of literature ; it quickened and liberalized the very soul of the English nation. Innumerable changes in architecture, in dress, in gardening, were but outward demonstrations of the extent to which Italy had swayed England to her mood. Beside such a power, the succeeding influence of France was both superficial and restricted. It dealt chiefly with *style*, the outward, technical side of the literary art ; a side in which the French excel, and which the English genius is prone to neglect.

#### IV.—THE MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD. SINCE ABOUT 1750

During this final period England outgrew her temporary mood of unbelief, criticism, and shallowness, and with it her reliance on the literary style of France. She has again expressed in her literature new and deep feelings, a wider love for mankind and a belief in the brotherhood of all men ; a new power of entering into the life of nature. She has depended little for her inspiration on other nations, although to some extent influenced by Germany and Italy, and has produced literary works second only to those of the Elizabethan masters.

These periods, considered in detail, form respectively the subjects of the four parts into which this work is divided.



## PART I

### PERIOD OF PREPARATION. 670-1400

---

#### CHAPTER I

##### RACE, LANGUAGE, AND LITERATURE BEFORE CHAUCER

WHEN we examine the four periods into which we have divided the history of English literature, we notice that the first, or preparatory, period is distinguished from the others in one important particular. Throughout its whole extent, or from about the seventh to the fourteenth century, England has no national language ; no speech common to all classes of the people and to all sections of the country. Even for the service of literature no one language is established, but many books are written in Latin, some in Norman-French, and others in different dialects of an English which seems to us almost as strange as a foreign tongue.

On the other hand the three remaining periods, while differing from each other in certain special characteristics, have at least one great feature in common—in them all literature has one standard or national language. By the beginning of the first of these three periods, the literary and national suprem-

acy of one particular variety of English was assured. That variety has since been the universal English speech ; it has remained unchanged, except by the gradual and natural processes of growth, from the time of its first great poet-master, Geoffrey Chaucer, to the time of Alfred Tennyson, its last.

But while this broad distinction between the first and the three following periods of our literature should be grasped, it should not distract our attention from the close and vital relations which bind the preparatory centuries to the later time.

The comparative richness of the literature since Chaucer's time, as well as the remoteness and the difficulties of language which beset us before that period, tend to make us lose sight of the living interest and meaning of the earlier era, and its practical bearing on the five succeeding centuries of literary production. To slight this formative period is to begin our biography of the nation's literature at its middle age. Not only had more than half of the entire mental life of England been lived before Chaucer wrote, but for more than seven hundred years that life had been struggling, more or less successfully, to write itself down in literature. There is no break between this literature and that of which Chaucer has often been styled the father, and no development of the *language* should prevent our recognizing that the continuity of the *literature* remains unimpaired. However true or convenient our division of the literary history of England into set periods, it is far more important for us to see that,

underlying all changes, the mental life of England, the literature of England, which is its most direct expression, even the language of England, made in time the one medium of that literature, have a continuous life and growth for more than twelve hundred years. In order that we may get some idea of the real unity running through the whole story of our literary development, we must indicate some of the ways in which the long period of growth before Chaucer led up to and prepared the way for the creation of the great works which are the glories of our English speech. Looking at this period in outline, we see that in it the way was prepared for the later literature :

**Features of  
the prepara-  
tory period.**

1. *By the making of the Race.*

The modern English people, whose national character English literature interprets and expresses, was formed during this time by the mixture of different race elements.

2. *By the Literature before the Norman Conquest.*

3. *By the Norman Conquest*, with its far-reaching effects on race, literature, and language.

4. *By the making of the Language* out of the combination of different tongues.

We thus see that on every side the characteristic of this preparatory period was the *progress toward unity, by the absorption and combination of separate elements*. One race is made by the fusion of many ; one language by the amalgamation of French and English ; one literature out of the literature of the English, the British, and the Norman, enriched and developed by the learning and culture of Rome.

## I. THE MAKING OF THE RACE.

The races which have combined in different proportions to make the modern English are :

*a. The English, or Anglo-Saxons ;* a people belonging to the *Teutonic* stock or group of races.

*b. The Britons,* from whom the *Welsh* are descended ; a people belonging to the *Celtic* stock.

*c. The Danes ;* a people, like the English, of the *Teutonic* group.

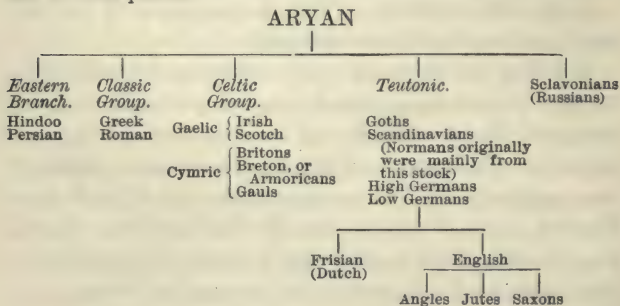
*d. The Normans, or Northmen ;* a people originally Teutonic by blood, but with some *Celtic* intermixture.

Thus we see that representatives of two great divisions of the Aryan people have entered at various times into the composition of the English, viz.: the *Teuton* and the *Celt*.\*

The English settlers of Britain were Low German tribes, resembling in language, and to some extent in character, their neighbors the Frisians, the modern Dutch, to whom they

The English.

\* The following table of the principal European branches of the Aryan family will make the precise position of the English and Britons plainer :





were closely related by blood. Two of the three English tribes, the Saxons and the Angles, came from what are now the Schleswig-Holstein provinces of Northern Germany, the country about the mouth of the river Elbe, which lies to the north of Holland. The third tribe, the Jutes, held that peninsula yet farther northward which is now part of Denmark. This early home of the English, with its harshness, gloom, and privations, was a land to breed men. Fierce storms beat down upon it, and often in the spring and autumn the sea swept over its sunken, muddy coasts, flooding it far inland. Dismal curtains of fog settled over it; its miles of tangled forests were soaked and dripping with frequent rains.

The other home of the English was the sea. The eldest son succeeded to his father's lands; as soon as the younger sons grew old enough they took to the war-ships to win fame and plunder by slaughter and pillage. Their high-prowed galleys were a menace and a terror to the richer coast settlements far southward, and prayers were regularly offered in some churches for a deliverance from their fury. Swift in pursuit, quick and merciless in attack, they were swift also in flight. Fair-haired, blue-eyed men, big-boned and muscular, they combined an heroic fearlessness and audacity with a savage bloodthirstiness and greed. The healthy animal was yet strong in them; they were huge feeders and deep drinkers. Yet they were a young race with stores of unwasted vigor; with an immense, if brutal, energy; with an enormous and unspent capacity for life, for feeling, for thought, for action. To understand them we

must penetrate beneath the surface of riot and bloodshed to the redeeming and noble traits which lay, yet undeveloped, at the base of the national character.

Beside the moral corruption of the decaying Roman civilization, their lives stood sound and pure. While they showed no tendency to romantic sentiment, women were given a high and honorable place among them. The passion of love may be said to have no place in their literature. One brief strain of love is indeed heard in it, but it is in celebration of the assured and domestic affection of the wife, not of the ecstasy of a youthful sentiment. It is the poem of the English fireside.

“ Dear the welcomed one  
To the Frisian wife, when the Floater’s drawn on shore,  
When his keel comes back, and her churl returns to home,  
Hers, her own food-giver. And she prays him in,  
Washes then his weedy coat, and new weeds puts on him.  
Oh, lythe \* it is on land to him, whom his love constrains.” †

We find, too, in the early English, that instinct for law and freedom which in the coming generations was to build parliaments and create republics. They had no less that splendid seriousness, that reverence for life and death, that profoundly religious spirit which animates and inspires the greatest productions of English literature. In spite of all their delight in the joy of battle, in spite of their feasting and drunken revelry, there runs

\* *Lythe*, pleasant, soft.

† Stopford Brooke’s translation in *History of Early English Literature*.

through their poetry the persistent undertone of a settled melancholy. They look death steadily in the face as "the necessary end"; they are continually impressed by the sense of the power of fate against which the weapons of the warriors are idle.

" One shall sharp hunger slay ;  
One shall the storms beat down ;  
One shall be destroyed by darts ;  
One die in war ;  
One shall live losing  
The light of his eyes,  
Feel blindly with fingers ;  
And one, lame of foot,  
With sinew-wound wearily  
Wasteth away,  
Musing and mourning  
With death in his mind." \*

Again and again the same haunting thought recurs, put forth with no outburst of complaint, but with a stoical and unflinching acceptance.

" All the realm of earth is full of hardship,  
The world 'neath Heaven is turned by Fate's decree." †

In another poem we are forced to descend into the very grave and watch the dust return to dust.‡

Yet this haunting sense of the shortness of life did not produce in the early English the determination to enjoy to-day. Living in the rush of battle and

\* "The Fortunes of Man." Morley's translation, *English Writers*, vol. ii. p. 33.

† *The Wanderer*. See preface to Cynewulf's *Christ*, Gollancz' translation.

‡ *The Grave*, a characteristic poem. See Study List, p. 47

tempest, it rather stimulated them to quit themselves as heroes. The English conscience speaks in such lines as these :

“ This is best laud from the living  
In last words spoken about him :  
He worked ere he went his way,  
When on earth, against wiles of the foe,  
With brave deeds overcoming the devil.” \*

In these early English we recognize those great traits of mind and character which have continued to animate the race ; traits which in the centuries to come were to take shape in the deeds of heroes and the songs of poets. In these half-savage pirate tribes, with their deep northern melancholy, is the germ of that masterful and aggressive nation which was to put a girdle of English round the world. Of their blood are the sea-dogs who chased the towering galleons of the Spanish Armada, the six hundred who charged to death at Balaclava, or those other English, our own forefathers, who declared and maintained their inheritance of freedom. The spirit of this older England, enriched by time, is alive, too, in the words of Shakespeare, of Milton, and of Browning, as it is in the deeds of Raleigh, of Chatham, and of Gordon.

When the English began to settle in Britain, about the middle of the fifth century, the island was occupied by tribes of a people called Celts.

**The Celts.**

In early times this race held a great part of Western Europe as well as the British Isles,

\* “ The Seafarer.” Morley’s translation, *English Writers*, vol. ii. p. 24.

until conquered or pushed aside by the Teutonic races, the group to which the English belong. Scotland and Ireland were occupied by one great division of the Celts, the Gaels, and what is now England by another, the Cymri, or, as we commonly call them, the Britons. The Celts were a very different race from the Teutons, and the Britons were as thoroughly Celtic in their disposition as the English were Teutonic. For more than fourteen hundred years Celt and Teuton have dwelt together in England, for while the Britons were driven westward by the English, they were far from being exterminated, and in certain sections these two races have blended into one. This mixture of the races has been greatest in the north and west; for instance, in such counties as Devon, Somerset, Warwick, and Cumberland. From the mixed race thus formed, a race which combined the genius of two dissimilar and gifted peoples, many of the greatest poets of England have sprung. Indeed it may be truly said, that English literature is the expression and outcome, not of the English race and character alone, but of that character modified and enriched by the Celt. Not only has the Celtic blood thus mingled with the English. Celtic poetry and legend have furnished subject and inspiration to English writers down to our own day. It is, therefore, important for us to gain some notion of the Celtic as well as of the early English spirit, for in the literature of England we recognize the presence of both.

The Britons, like the English, were a huge and powerful race; they had fierce gray or bluish eyes,



and light or reddish hair. Wild as they seemed before they lost their native vigor under **The Britons.** the Roman rule, they had a natural vein of poetry and sentiment more pathetic and delicate than the somewhat prosaic and stolid English. They were quick-witted, unstable, lacking the English capacity for dogged and persistent effort, easily depressed and easily exalted, quickly sensitive to romance, to beauty, to sadness. Beside the stern and massive literature of the early English, with its dark background of storm and forest, with its resolution and its fatalism, with the icy solitude of its northern ocean, stands that of the Celt, bright as fairy-land with gorgeous colors and the gleam of gold and precious stones, astir with the quick play of fancy, enlivened by an un-English vivacity and humor, and touched by an exquisite pathos. Here is the description from one of the Celtic romances of a young knight going out to seek his fortune :

“ And the youth pricked forth upon a steed with head dappled gray, of four winters old, firm of limb, with shell-formed hoofs, having a bridle of linked gold on his head, and on him a saddle of costly gold. And in the youth's hand were two spears of silver, sharp, well-tempered, headed with steel, three ells in length, of an edge to wound the wind and cause blood to flow, and swifter than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at the heaviest. A gold-hilted sword was upon his thigh, the blade of which was of gold, bearing a cross of inlaid gold of the hue of the lightning of heaven ; his war horn was of ivory. Before him were two brindled, white-breasted greyhounds, having strong collars of rubies about their necks, reaching from the shoulder to the ear. And the one that was

on the left side bounded across to the right side, and the one on the right to the left, and like two sea swallows sported round him.

And the blade of grass bent not beneath him, so light was his step as he journeyed toward the gate of Arthur's palace."\*

The familiar figure of the young man going forth to conquer the world in the strength of his youth, is here emblazoned with all the glowing colors, the delicate fancy of the Celtic genius.

Or take the following as an illustration of the Celtic sentiment and Celtic love of nature :

"The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-colored silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold, on which were precious emeralds and rubies. More yellow was her head than the flower of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the three-mewed falcon, was not brighter than hers. Whoso beheld her was filled with her love; four white trefoils sprung up where'er she trod."†

And finally, as an example of the Celtic humor, add the picture of another maiden as a study of the grotesque :

"And thereupon they saw a black curly-headed maiden enter, riding upon a yellow mule, with jagged thongs in her hand to urge it on, and having a rough and hideous aspect. Blacker were her face and her hands than the blackest iron covered with pitch, and her hue was not more frightful than

\* "Kilhwch and Olwen," Guest's *Mabinogion*, p. 219.

† *Ibid.*, p. 233.

her form. High cheeks had she and a face lengthened downward and a short nose with distended nostrils. And one eye was of a piercing mottled gray, and the other was black as jet, deep sunk in her head. And her teeth were long and yellow, more yellow were they than the flower of the broom . . . and her figure was very thin and spare except her feet, which were of huge size." \*

While the early English had certain great traits of character which were lacking in the Celt—the genius for governing, steadfastness, earnestness—the Celt was strong where the English were deficient. The mingling of these races, therefore, during the long period before the outburst of literature in the fourteenth century, was an important element in the unconscious preparation for the latter time. We can better understand this by remembering that William Shakespeare, the greatest genius of the modern world, was born in a district where the mixture of these two races was especially great, and that by inheritance, as by the quality of his genius, we may think of him as the highest example of this union of Celt and Teuton. "It is not without significance that the highest type of the race, the one Englishman who has combined in the largest measure the mobility and fancy of the Celt with the depth and energy of the Teutonic temper, was born on the old Welsh and English border-land in the forest of Arden." †

\* "Story of Peredur," *Mabinogion*, Guest's edition, 114.

† J. R. Green, quoted in article on "Shakespeare," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition, by Prof. T. Spencer Baynes, which consult on this subject.

## II. LITERATURE BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST

To this preparation by the making of the race must be added the expanding and deepening of the English nature, which, taught by experience, refined and spiritualized by Christianity and by Latin culture, labored to embody its widening ideas of life in some literary form. To realize the part played by Christianity in the development of English literature we must go back to the preceding centuries of heathenism.

Like the early Greeks and other primitive races, the English had created a body of poetry and myth long before they were able to give it a written form. Their imagination had **Early English heathenism.** peopled the world about them with indwelling powers ; the giant of the forest, the dwarf of the mine, Nicor the water-sprite, whose name survives in the nixies of popular song and legend.

Their religion seems to have been that of the Scandinavian, impressive in its vast and rough-hewn majesty. Crude, gigantic shapes loom up through this Teutonic mythology as through a cloud : Woden, the father of the gods ; Thor, with his mighty hammer, the god of thunder and of tempest ; Saxnéat, the god of war ; and Tiw, the sword god, a fierce and terrible power whom none could encounter and live. Among these are gentler divinities, often personifying the creative and beneficent forces of nature arrayed against the destructive and warring powers of cold, darkness, and storm ; Frea, the divinity of joy, warmth, and harvests ; the



radiant and gracious Balder, the sun god ; Eostre, the remnant of a yet earlier mythology, the shining goddess of springtime and dawn, from whose name our Easter is taken. Back of all these is Wyrd, Destiny, including in one person the three attributes Past, Present, and Future, embodiment of that ingrained northern fatalism which has been already spoken of as a primary English trait.\* Beowulf, the hero of our oldest English epic, is true to the spirit of his race, when he cries before his last fight, "To us it shall be as our Wyrd betides, that Wyrd is every man's lord."†

Side by side with these early myths and popular fancies was poetry, here, as among other primitive races, the handmaid of religion and of history. It is to poetry that the great races turn in their childhood by a deep universal instinct, when they would give vent to their primal passions—joy, suffering, or the lust of battle. We may picture the English, like their German kindred, working themselves up to a frenzied joy in slaughter before rushing into action, by chanting wild and discordant hymns to the god of battles.‡

\* In the Scandinavian mythology these three attributes of Fate were separate persons. Urd (hence the English Wyrd), the Past, Werdaudi, the Present, and Skuld, the Future. These three Fatal Sisters wove the web of human destiny. Gray's poem, *The Fatal Sisters*, may be read in class. Discuss also possible connection of the *Nornes* with the weird sisters or witches of Macbeth, for which see *Academy* (February 8, 1879) ; Dyer's *Folk Lore of Shakespeare*, p. 27.

† *Beowulf*, l. 2525.

‡ "A peculiar kind of verses is also current among them, by



In the midst of this turbulent, pitiless world of the early English, with its plundering, wasting, and burnings, stands the figure of the poet.

He is the scôp,\* the maker or shaper of The Scôp.

song; perhaps the servant of some great household, perhaps a wandering singer, a welcome guest at feasts. Enter in imagination one of the great halls on a night of feasting, if you would know what the scôp was in that rude society. At one end sits the king, on a high platform; fires are blazing on the stone flagging along the center, lighting up the gold-woven tapestries, and glittering on helmet and buckler hanging on the walls. At the two tables which run lengthwise of the hall sit the warriors, eating boar's flesh and venison, and in the midst, while a thegn carries round the drinking cups of ale

the recital of which, termed 'barding,' they stimulate their courage, while the sound itself serves as an augury of the event of the impending combat. For, according to the nature of the cry proceeding from the line, terror is inspired or felt; nor does it seem so much an articulate song as the wild chorus of valor. A harsh, piercing note, and a broken roar are their favorite tones, which they render more full and sonorous by applying their mouths to their shields."—Tacitus, *Germania*, ch. 3, Oxford translation.

\* *Scôp*, from A. S. *scieppan*, to make or create; creation being generally recognized as the supreme faculty of the poet; v. note on *trouvère*, p. 104. Among the early English the gleeman occupied an inferior place, as the singer, rather than the composer, of verses. *Gomenwudu* and *gléobéam* were the names of the harp; *gléóman*, or gleeman, of the harper. The gleeman also performed juggling or acrobatic feats in very early times. The relative position of scôp and gleeman correspond somewhat to that of *trouvère* and *jongleur*.

and mead, the gleeman sings of the deeds of heroes, marking the beats of his rude chanting by chords struck upon the harp. By his life, given to song, he stands apart from all the rest ; the special representative of mind in the midst of brute force, the forerunner of that great world power we call literature. But the scôp, or gleeman, was not the only singer at feasts ; often the harp was passed from hand to hand, and king and thegn sang in turn, or some hoary warrior told of the battles of his youth.\* Thus in battle-hymn or dirge, in hero songs, in gnostic or proverbial verses, we find the half-forgotten beginnings of English literature. Songs were common property. Passed on from one singer to another, altered or enlarged at pleasure, they grew by frequent repetition, while their origin and the name of the poet who first sung them was often uncared for and unknown.

Two very early poems, perhaps of continental origin, *Widsith*, or the *Far Wanderer*, and the *Complaint of Deor*,† deal with the life and fortunes of the scôp.

The first of these has little poetic merit, but deserves mention as containing passages thought to be the earliest remaining specimens of "Widsith." Anglo-Saxon verse. Widsith, a scôp, enumerates the various courts at which he has been received in his wandering singer's life, and tells of the rich gifts that have been given him for his songs. He seems to have been popular, as he shows us only

\* *Beowulf*, l. 496 ; v. also Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, story of Cædmon.

† Translated by E. H. Hickey in the *Academy*, May 14, 1881.

the bright side of the poet's life, dwelling on the liberality of his hearers and the widespread appreciation of song. The *Complaint of Deor*, on the other hand, brings before us the scôp in misfortune. Deor was not an itinerant singer; he belonged to a special household and was dear to his lord, until displaced by a rival whose songs found greater favor. Deor tries to reconcile himself to this by calling to mind the many wise and good who have endured sorrow.

We should gain nothing by a mere enumeration of other minor poems of this period. It is enough to say here that they deserve to be read by every serious student of our literature, if only for one reason: They come into the midst of our nineteenth century from a world that lies buried under the dust and trappings of twelve centuries. Read with that deep human sympathy by which alone we can truly decipher the records of any past, we can find, beneath all that overlays it, the breath of life.

Among these early poems, *Beowulf*, the oldest epic of any Germanic people, containing some six thousand lines, stands alone in magnitude and importance. The scene of the poem is laid on the continent,\* probably in Denmark. The date of its composition is doubtful, but scholars have shown, from certain historical allusions, that the

\* Mr. Daniel H. Haigh dissents from the general opinion on this point. He believes the poem originated in Northumbria, and places the action in county Durham, England.—*Anglo-Saxon Sagas: An Examination of their Value as Aids to History*. By Daniel H. Haigh.

events related must have taken place between the early part of the sixth and the middle of the eighth century.\* Its author is unknown. *Beowulf* may have originated on the continent shortly before the English invasion of Britain ; and, carried from thence to England, have grown gradually by oral repetition until some Christian singer, perhaps a Northumbrian monk of the eighth century, gave it final form. The note of the poem is strife. Not the onset of armies, nor the wrestling against flesh and blood, but the single-handed struggle of Beowulf with three monstrous and mysterious incarnations of the powers of evil. Around these three combats of Beowulf the action of the poem centers. Hrothgar, a Danish king, builds for himself a splendid mead-hall, Heorot, wherein he sits feasting with his thegns. A fiendish monster, Grendel, lurking in the dark marshes without, is tortured by the sounds of minstrelsy that reach him from the hall. In jealous hate he enters Heorot by night and slays thirty sleeping companions of the king. Again and again he comes to destroy, until the splendid hall has to be forsaken. After twelve years Beowulf, a prince of the Geats, or Goths, endowed with the strength of thirty men, comes with his followers in a ship to rid Hrothgar of this scourge. He is made welcome, and that night he and his band occupy the hall. All are asleep save Beowulf, when Grendel strides into the hall, his eyes glowing like flames. He snatches a warrior, rends him to pieces, and greedily devours him. Then he attacks Beowulf and they close in deadly grapple, the

\* *I. e.*, not earlier than 511-512 A. D., nor later than 752 A. D.



hero using no weapon, but trusting solely in his mighty strength. The stanch hall trembles with the fierceness of the contest; the massive benches are splintered, the Danes stand around, panic-stricken. Then Grendel, howling, strives to escape, but Beowulf crushes him with his terrible hand-grip. At length the demon, with the loss of an arm, wrenches himself free, and flies to the fens to die. On the morrow all crowd round Beowulf rejoicing, but the next night Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son, and carries off one of the thegns. Beowulf resolves to conquer this new foe. With his thegns he tracks the woman fiend over murky moors, through rocky gorges, and by the haunts of the water nixies, until he comes upon a stagnant pool, frothing with blood and overhung by gloomy trees. By night the waters are livid with flame. The deer, pursued by dogs, will die on the bank rather than tempt those unsounded depths. It is a place of terror. Beowulf plunges in and fights the water fiend in her cave under the flood. His sword proves useless against her. Again he trusts to sheer strength. "So it behoves a man to act when he thinks to attain enduring praise;—he will not be caring for his life." \* Beowulf falls, and the fiend is above him, her knife drawn. Then the hero snatches from a pile of arms a mighty sword, giant-forged, and slays his adversary. Again there is mirth and praise at Heorot.

In the last part of the poem Beowulf has become King of the Goths and has ruled over them for fifty winters. At this time the land is worried by a

\* *Beowulf*, p. 50, Earle's translation.



dragon, who sets men's homes aflame with his fiery breath. The dragon's lair is near a wild headland at whose front the sea breaks ; here Beowulf seeks him and gives battle, trusting "in the strength of his single manhood." The old king is again victorious, but is mortally hurt. He bids a follower bring out the dragon's treasure hoard, and as the glistening gold and jewels are spread on the grass, he gives thanks that he has won them for his people. So Beowulf dies, and a lofty mound is raised in his honor on the high cliff, which sailors, in voyaging upon the deep, could behold from far. The poem ends in a requiem of praise :

" Lamented thus  
The loyal Goths,  
Their chieftain's fall,  
Hearth-fellows true ;—  
They said he was,  
Of all kings in the world,  
Mildest to his men  
And most friendly,  
To his lieges benigneſt,  
And moſt bent upon glory." \*

Something of the poem's spirit makes itself felt even through this meager summary. We catch something of its profound earnestness,

**Spirit of the  
poem.**

its gloom, its simple-minded intensity. Beowulf, the one central figure, moves before us in heroic proportions. In his courtesy, his vast strength, his quiet courage, his self-reliance, his submission to fate, he may stand as the pattern of the early English ideal of manhood, as Achilles of the

\* Earle's translation. Introduction, lxxiii.

early Greek. The story is relieved by few gentler touches. As a background to this life of conflict, nature rises before us, harsh, somber, pitiless, alive with superstitious terrors, dreary amid the remoteness and savagery of the northern solitudes. The prevailing gloom is unbroken by color, or laughter, or the gracious happiness of lovers. The lighted mead-hall, indeed, echoes with song and cheer, but about it lie the black wastes, the haunt of demons. Such a tone suits best with the unflinching courage, the uncompromising morality, which thrill through the poem. Life may not be a pleasant thing ; it may be made a noble thing. "He who has the chance should work mighty deeds before he die ; that is for a mighty man the best memorial."\* The ideal embodied in the life of this early English hero anticipates by a thousand years the spirit of the noble precept of the great Puritan :

"Nor love thy life, nor hate ; but what thou liv'st,  
Live well ; how long or short permit to Heaven." †

Courage, fortitude, self-sacrifice, these things are preferred to the pleasures of the senses, even to life itself. Even in these bitter times of robbery and murder, the English nature could at least perceive, in all its difficult austerity, a fundamental principle of all noble living. Such stuff was there in the English even while they were yet heathen.

For we are to remember that, notwithstanding some Christian passages of a later date, these earliest poems

\* *Beowulf*, ll. 1387-1390.

† *Paradise Lost*, bk. xi. l. 553.

are essentially the utterance of a heathen people.

**Heathen element in early poems.** These barbarians, too, faced nature, and life, and death, wonderingly but fearlessly.

ly, the old questions of humanity deep in their hearts. Reading their poems, we can understand how that heathen Earldorman of Northumbria came to liken man's life to a sparrow, coming from the blank darkness which walls us in to tarry but for a little in the warmth of a lighted hall, and then vanish again into the darkness and be lost.\*

In characters so strong and serious Christianity became a vital force, directing the currents not only of life, but of thought and of literature. Accordingly the bringing of this heathen England within the circle of Christendom makes an epoch in the history of English literature.

For a century and a half after the first English occupation, Britain lay a wedge of heathendom between Christian Europe and Christian

**Conversion of the English.**

Ireland. The civilization and culture of Europe were mainly Roman ; the guardian of this culture was the Church. To be heathen was, therefore, to be cut off from the main source of education, to be shut out from the intellectual life of the time. During the sixth and seventh centuries light streamed into this darkened Britain from the east and from the west. In 597 St. Augustine planted the Church in Kent, the interrupted communication between Rome and Britain was re-estab-

\* Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, bk. ii. chap. xiii., or Green's *English People*, vol. i. p. 46. V. also Wordsworth's rendering of this, *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, xiv.

lished, and Canterbury became the first great center in England of Latin learning and influence.

While the Roman Church in Kent strove with but little lasting success to win the remoter English kingdoms to the faith, the impassioned zeal of Irish missionaries wrought in the north what the followers of St. Augustine had failed to accomplish. Aidan, the first of these, came into Northumbria from the Irish mission station at Iona (635). English paganism gave way before Celtic enthusiasm and devotion, and the tide of Irish Christianity spread slowly southward. While the light was thus shining from the west, three men landed in Britain (668), bringing from the far east a culture higher than any the English had yet known. These were Theodore of Tarsus, (602-670), who had studied Greek at Athens; Benedict Biscop or Baducing (*cir.* 628-670), a Northumbrian of noble birth, returning from his second journey to Rome, and Adrian or Hadrian, an African monk. By their learning and devotion these three great teachers may be said to have created in England a new life of the intellect. They carried the precious learning of the Eastern Empire, then almost extinct in Western Europe, into the savagery of an island on the margin of Christendom. Through them there arose amid the solitudes of fenland or forest the walls of the monastic schools. Greek, practically lost to Western Europe from the fifth to the fifteenth century, was taught in seventh century England, and Theodore's pupils read the very words of Homer. Under Hadrian the school at Canterbury became the nursery of the new culture, while in

Northumbria, near Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne, Biscop set the twin schools of St. Peter and St. Paul (674-679), revisiting Rome to procure for them a priceless store of manuscripts. Under the combined stimulus of Christianity and Latin culture, literature burst into life. At the monastery of Whitby founded by Aidan, on a bleak headland of the Northumbrian coast,\* Cædmon chants his *Paraphrase of the Scriptures* (cir. 670) the first English poem unquestionably native to English soil. At the monastery of Jarrow, Bæda or Bede (673-735), a pupil of Biscop's, became one of the greatest teachers and prose writers of his time, while Aldhelm (656-709), who represents the scholarship and poetry of Southern England, as Bede does that of the North, comes from Malmsbury, a monastery which the Irish had founded,† to study under Hadrian at Canterbury. The birthplace of English literature in England is thus within the shadow of the Church. For centuries its history centers about monasteries such as those which Biscop planted; quiet strongholds and retreats where poet, chronicler, and teacher, nourished

\*The spot is thus graphically described by Green: "As we look over the wide stretch of country whose billowy swells and undulations lift themselves dark at eventide from the mist veil that lies white around them, we see again the waste in which Hild reared her home, its gray reaches of desolate water skimmed but by the white wings of gull or albatross, its dark tracts of desolate moor silent save for the wolf's howl or eagle's scream."—*Making of England*, p. 368.

† Founded by Maidulf, an Irish scholar, shortly after 658.—Green's *Making of England*, p. 339.



on some fragments of past learning, were sheltered from the coarse violence without.

The rapidity with which the new religion transformed barbarians into saints and scholars bears witness, not only to the power of Christianity and culture, but also to the religious temper and inherent capacity of the English mind. In less than a century an unlettered and heathen people became, under these influences, the intellectual leaders and teachers of Western Europe. From the last quarter of the seventh to the beginning of the eighth century, while Europe was a chaotic sea of contention, the lamp of literature and learning shone from England with a single and solitary radiance.

Religious instinct in the Early English.

In England itself, while learning flourished in Kent and Wessex, Northumbria held the intellectual and literary, as she had held the political supremacy. There, where the best that Irish zeal and scholarship could give was mingled with the choicest learning of the East, we find Cædmon and Bede; there, we conjecture, was the home of the poet Cynewulf, who has left us but his works and his name; there, too, was Alcuin (*cir.* 735–804), who brought from his school at York the learning of Northumbria to the service of Charlemagne.\*

Literary supremacy of Northumbria.

\* Stubbs and others point out the importance of Northumbrian scholarship to European civilization. "It may be said that the civilization and learning of the eighth century rested on the monastery which he (Biscop) founded, which produced Bede, and through him, the school of York, Alcuin, and the

The beautiful story of Cædmon, our earliest poet, is told us by Bede, our first great writer of prose.

**Cædmon.** Cædmon, at first a dependent and afterward a monk at the monastery of St. Hilda at Whitby, is brought before us as one to whom poetry came as the gift of Heaven. Unable to sing the heathen war-songs of the past, a stranger appeared to him in a dream and commanded him to sing "in praise of the creation." Whereupon he began to sing those verses "in praise of God, the Creator of all things" which are the first notes of the great antiphon of English poetry. When the abbess heard of this she had Cædmon taught all the Bible narrative, and he, ruminating on what he heard, turned the most striking portions into verse, paraphrasing in this way much of the books of Genesis, Exodus, and Daniel, and "many other histories of Holy Writ."

We need not inquire into the authorship of the Scriptural paraphrase which has reached us under Cædmon's name. The incidents selected for treatment show a general correspondence with those in Cædmon's work, as described by Bede ; on the other hand there are breaks in the narrative, and reasons for believing the work to be a medley of poems by separate authors. However this may be, it is pleasant to think that part of it at least was made by Cædmon in the dawn of our English song.

In form the *Paraphrase* is in the abrupt, short-line Carolingian school on which the culture of the Middle Ages was based."—Stubbs, *Smith's Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. i. p. 309.

measure of *Beowulf*, with the compressed style and the inverted construction which mark <sup>Cædmon's</sup> the early English verse. It is without "Paraphrase." rhyme, relying solely on *accent* and *alliteration*, according to the practice of the Anglo-Saxons. In subject and in spirit only, it is a departure from the heathen war-song. It is the song of a Christian scôp, showing the grafting of new elements upon an ancient stock. The Creation, the Fall of Man, the Flood, the Sacrifice of Isaac, the Passage of the Red Sea, and other parts of the Bible story, are told rapidly and simply, but with touches of that vivid definiteness which shows the true poet's gift of seeing. When we are told that the raven sent out from the Ark, "perched exultingly on the floating corpses," or when Abram, looking back, sees the "white-turreted habitations of the Egyptians glitter brightly in the sun," one stroke creates the picture. The story is Oriental, but the tone is English, for events are seen in the light of the poet's own experience. Satan's followers are bound to him by the same ties of gratitude and allegiance as those which united the English thegns to their lord; the sons of Reuben are styled "sea-vikings." The very pains of hell suggest the rigors of a frigid clime :

" Then cometh the dawn  
 The Eastern wind,  
 Frost bitter cold  
 Ever fire or dart." \*

The poet of the barren North recurs with a touch-

\* Thorpe's translation, iv. l. 26.

ing frequency to the greatness and fertility of the earth:

“ The green earth  
Which was with waters moistened,  
And with fruit decked,  
Washed with liquid streams  
And like God’s  
Paradise.” \*

In many places, like the breaking forth of central fires, there spurts out the primitive joy of battle; the poet hears the rush of javelins, sees the waiting ravens hover over the field, the gray wolf lurk at the dusky edges of the wood, “the dark chooser of the slain,” or he exults in :

“ The birds tearing  
Amid the slaughter of the swords,” †

The destruction of Pharaoh’s host is chanted with a terrible and triumphant power. The cry of the perishing is in the waves, the waters full of weapons. The flood “rises as a cloud” against the Egyptians. The blue air is tainted with corruption; corpses roll in the foaming gulfs; the Guardian of the flood strikes the unsheltering waves with his ancient falchion, and the band of the sinful sink, their souls fast encompassed.

Bede tells us that many others beside Cædmon composed religious poems in English. These doubtless, like the Miracle plays of later times, did much to establish Christianity in the hearts of the people. Some of the

Other religious poems.

\* Thorpe’s trans., p. 19.

† *Ibid.*, p. 126.

pieces of this character, probably composed during the great period of Northumbrian literature, or between 670 and 800 or 825, are among the best productions of Anglo-Saxon verse. Some deal with miraculous legends of the saints, like the *Andreas*, which tells of the trials and final triumph of St. Andrew in Mirmedonia, the *Guthlac*, and the *Juliana*. Some are metrical translations of the Psalms. Others, like the *Judith*, which contains a strong description of the killing of Holofernes, are directly based on the Bible. Even the *Seafarer*, which carries with it the very spell of the sea, its perils, and nameless fascination, till we hear the "wash of the waves," and feel our cheeks sting with the icy spray, is a religious allegory, and closes in a strain of devoutness and praise.

We know almost nothing of the poet, or poets, who created this cycle of religious verse. Three poems, the *Juliana*, the *Christ*, and the *Elene*, or *The Finding of the Cross*, are Cynewulf. certainly the work of a poet named Cynewulf (b. *cir.* 720-730?), as he has imbedded his name in the text arranged as an acrostic, and written in Runic letters. Of the man Cynewulf nothing remains; we have but his works and his name. He is generally thought to have been a Northumbrian scôp of the eighth century, and many poems, including the *Andreas*, the *Judith*, and the *Seafarer*, have been attributed to him, besides the three certainly his.

His poem of *Christ* is in three parts, which treat respectively of the Nativity, the Ascension, and the



Day of Judgment. We are not disturbed here, as in Cædmon's *Paraphrase*, by any harsh intrusion of the old heathenism ; the poet Cynewulf's "Christ," seems wholly filled with a new spirit of hope and blessedness and peace. Reading this after the somber and cheerless fatalism of the earlier poems, we seem to have passed from death into life, out of darkness into a marvelous light. The whole poem seems shining and radiant with brightness and joy, and with the assurance of a final triumph. The heavens are opened, and we hear the hymning of angels. The voice of God declares, in words that seem to scatter the ancient darkness of English heathenism :

" Let there be light for ever and ever,  
A radiant joy for each of living men  
Who in their generations shall be born." \*

The light and happiness which seem in an indescribable way to flow out to us from the poem are broken only by the terrible vision of Judgment, when the guilty are shaken by the voice of doom. Then, with a rapturous description of the happiness of the blessed, the poem closes :

" There is angels' song ; the bliss of the happy ;

A gladsome host of men ; youth without age ;  
The glory of the heavenly chivalry ; health without pain  
For righteous workers ; and for souls sublime  
Rest without toil ; there is day without dark gloom,  
Ever gloriously bright ; bliss without bale ;

\* *Christ*, Golancz' translation.

Friendship 'twixt friends forever without feud ;  
 Peace without enmity for the blest in Heaven,  
 In the communion of Saints." \*

*The Elene*, which some consider Cynewulf's greatest work, tells how Constantine, in peril from the Huns, sees the cross in a vision, and is told by an angel that he shall conquer by that token. He is victorious ; and after learning to what religion the sign belongs he becomes a Christian. The rest of the poem deals with the journey of his mother, Helena, in quest of the true cross, which is found buried on Mount Calvary with two others. A dead man is placed on each cross in turn. The touch of the third restores him to life, and the true cross is thus found.

The prose of Aldhelm and of Bede marks the beginning of a new literary era. The English poetry of Cædmon, the scôp, is a natural outgrowth of a literary form native to the English ; the Latin prose of Bede, the monk-scholar, reminds us of the rise of men of a new type in England, representatives of a class destined to guide for centuries the intellectual development of Europe.

**Bede and English prose.**

Bæda or Bede was born near Wearmouth in 673. Early left an orphan, he entered the neighboring monastery which Biscop had recently founded, and there lived out his useful, tranquil life, finding his pleasure in learning, or teaching, or writing. With the keen love of knowledge, the patient industry, the

\* *Christ*, Golancz' translation, l. 1648, etc.

broadly receptive mind of a great scholar, he gathered to himself and summed up much that was best in the various streams of culture that met in the England of that day. Besides the teachings of Biscop and the use of his store of manuscripts, he absorbed the learning of Ireland, of Canterbury, of Gaul, and of Rome. Besides Greek and Latin, he knew something of Hebrew, and the treatise *De Natura Rerum*, long used as a text-book in the mediæval schools, shows him to have mastered the entire range of the science of that day. His commentaries on the Bible furnished the material for later work; his *Lives of the Saints* associate him with the beginning of biographical literature in Europe, his great work on the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, still the chief authority for the period of which it treats,\* has gained for him the title of the "Father of English History." These, and many other works on almost every subject known to the learning of that day, are in Latin; but his last labor, the closing words of which he dictated to his scribes almost with his dying breath, was an English translation of the Gospel of St. John.

Besides writing forty-five books, Bede found time to be a great teacher. Six hundred pupils were gathered about him in his school at Jarrow, and we trace his influence in the foundation of the great school at York.

The figure of our first great scholar rises before

\*The *Ecclesiastical History* begins with Cæsar's invasion of Britain and comes down to 731, or to four years before the death of Bede.

us high above the level of the men about him, full of devotion, gentleness, and simplicity. In him, as in Cynewulf, the stern submission to an unknown weird is lost in the joyous acceptance of a larger hope. Well might he repeat in his last illness that sentence of St. Ambrose: "I have not lived so as to be ashamed to live among you ; nor am I afraid to die, because we have a good God." The meaning and influence of such a life grows clearer, as we read in the unaffected words of one of his disciples the story of the master's death. With failing breath he had toiled through the day, dictating his translation of St. John's Gospel, and as the day closed, his work was done. At twilight, amid his weeping scholars, his face turned toward the oratory where he was wont to pray, with "great tranquillity" his soul went out from among them.\*

The conditions which had lifted Northumbria into intellectual leadership, and which had made Bede the teacher of the Western world, were **The coming of the Danes.** roughly broken. From the time of Bede's death, the once powerful kingdom of Northumbria was shaken by treason and anarchy, a prey to lawlessness, plague, and famine. Toward the close of the century (*cir.* 789) northern England is in the clutches of a new peril. Danish marauders swarm southward from their northern fiords, and the newly gained civilization of England is menaced by a fresh inrush of heathenism. The rich and defenseless

\* See Green's *History of the English People*, vol. i. p. 67. The story is originally told by Cuthbert in his letter to Cuthwine.

religious houses were shining marks for plunder. Of the monasteries at Jarrow and Holy Isle only the shattered walls were left. Early in the century following the Danes closed in on England with a yet fiercer persistence. Northumbrian learning was blotted out ; the Abbey of Whitby was demolished. Another band sacked Croyland, Peterborough, Huntingdon, and Ely. At last heathenism was confronted and beaten back by the steadfast heroism of Alfred (Battle of Edington, 878).

Under the treaty of Wedmore which followed (879), the south was secured to the English only by yielding the north to the invaders, and Northumbria lay prostrate under the heel of the barbarian.

Learning, thus stifled in the north, rose in the south into a new prominence under the unwearying and comprehensive energy of Alfred. When the king came to the throne he saw the great seats of learning destroyed, scholarship nearly extinct, and the whole people sinking back into ignorance. Not many north of the Humber, and hardly a man south of it, could understand the Latin service book, or translate a Latin letter. Alfred threw himself into the task of educational reform. He gathered learned men about him from many parts of Britain and from countries over sea : Asser the Welshman, Grimbald,\* from the country of the Franks. He rebuilt monasteries ; he founded a school at his court for the young nobles. He labored for the better training of the

\* Grimbald, or Grimbald, is supposed to have come from the Flemish monastery of St. Omer.



priesthood, on whom the intellectual as well as spiritual life of the country mainly rested. But his hopes for education, with a breadth of popular sympathy wonderful in those rude times, reach far beyond the limits of the clerical class. It is his wish that all the children of freemen of sufficient means, shall at least learn to read and write English. The motive back of his own writings is his desire to raise the general standard of education. He laments that as Latin is almost the sole language of scholarship, learning is locked up from the English reader. With a beautiful humility he becomes himself a pupil that he may be the teacher of his people as he is their ruler and defender. To meet the general need, he makes free renderings from the Latin, amplifying, explaining, and adapting them to the popular mind. In this way he prepared the *Consolation of Philosophy*, by Boethius, a heathen philosopher of the fifth and sixth centuries, a book full of lofty reflections, and much read during the Middle Ages. He also translated the *Pastoral Care* of Pope Gregory the Great, a book designed to show what the ideal priest should be, and sent a copy to the bishop of every diocese. General history was furnished by his rendering of a popular work by Orosius, a Spanish monk, and the past of England by his translation of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bede. It was in Alfred's reign, and probably under his direct influence and supervision, that the *Annals* or *Chronicle*, brief historical records which monks had noted down in certain monasteries from a very early period, were given a fuller and less fragmen-

The "Chronicle."

tary form. This *Chronicle* remains a wonderful monument to early English patriotism. Professor Earle thinks that the English began this practice of jotting down important contemporary events at least as early as the seventh century. However this may be, we have in the *Chronicle* a history, a considerable portion of which is contemporaneous, which stretches from the invasion of Cæsar in 55 B. C. to the death of Stephen, A. D. 1154. "From Alfred's time the narrative continues sometimes full, sometimes meager, sometimes a dry record of names and dates, sometimes rising to the highest flight of the prose picture or the heroic lay, but in one shape or other never failing us, till the pen dropped from the hand of the monk of Peterborough, who recorded the coming of Henry of Anjou."\* Some stirring songs of battle—such as *The Battle of Brunanburh*, *The Death of Byrhtnoth*, or, as it is sometimes called, *The Fight at Maldon*, appear in the midst of this prose chronicle, and are among the treasures of the earlier poetry.

However direct a share Alfred may have taken in the editing of the *Chronicle*, its improvement is naturally related to that elevation of English prose into a literary importance which is one of the glories of his reign. To Alfred the necessity for his work as a translator was doubtless a matter for regret; to him it meant the decline of Latin learning; to us it means also the beginning of English prose. As the history of English poetry reaches back to that great era when

\* E. A. Freeman, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, title "England."

Northumbrian scholarship was paramount in the west, the rise of English prose dates from the court of Alfred at Winchester.

The century and a half which lies between the death of Alfred and the Norman Conquest (901-1066) produced little of sufficient value from a purely literary aspect to detain the general reader. Yet certain features of the period must be fixed in the mind if we would not lose our hold on the continuity of England's mental growth. Although the country ceded to the Danes by the Peace of Wedmore (879) was gradually won back under Alfred's successors, Edward the Elder (901-925) and Athelstane (925-940), Wessex and the south retained that literary and political supremacy which Alfred had begun. After the ravages and final settlement of the Danes, the brilliant literary activity of the north seems to have been extinguished, and for more than three centuries after the death of Alcuin (804) the pathetic silence that settles down on Northumbria remains almost unbroken. In the south alone, where the effects of Alfred's practical enthusiasm still lingered, we find the traditions of culture and the signs of some literary activity. This southern learning and literature was chiefly associated with great religious foundations and with the history of the Church. The men who rise into literary prominence are chiefly ecclesiastical dignitaries: Dunstan (924-988), Abbot of Glastonbury, and afterward Archbishop of Canterbury; Æthelwold (908(?) - 984), Bishop of Winchester; Ælfric (fl. 1006), Abbot of Eyresham,

From Alfred  
to the Norman  
Conquest.

or Evesham, near Oxford. The energies of these men, and especially of the two last mentioned, were largely occupied in introducing into the English monasteries, that had become worldly and corrupt, the stricter rule of life which had already begun to prevail in Gaul and Flanders. They were educational and monastic reformers, and the tone of their work is consequently scholarly or theological. Ælfrie "is the voice of that great Church reform which is the most signal fact in the history of the latter half of the tenth century." His *Homilies*, or sermons (990-994), are famous in the history of early English prose.

On the whole we observe that while poetry had held a large place in Northumbria during the era of her literary leadership, the energies of Wessex during this later period find their main outlet in prose. The historic prose of the *Chronicle*, broken occasionally by the chant of the war-song, text-books, sermons, or the lives of saints, such is the shape taken by the literary production of this time, until we read signs of an altered mood in the period which directly precedes that mighty change in the history of England, the Norman Conquest.

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## STUDY LIST

### *LITERATURE FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO NORMAN CONQUEST*

1. CELTIC LITERATURE. Henry Morley gives specimens of Celtic poetry in his *English Writers*, vol. i. chap. iii. Among these *Llywarch's Lament for his son Gwenn* (p. 217),



*Lament for Cyndyllan* (p. 218), and *The Gododin* of Aneurin (p. 223), may be particularly noted. The poem last named is also, with others, in *Shorter English Poems*, edited by H. Morley in Cassell's Library of English Literature. V. also *Gaelic Poems*, edited with translation in the same volume, and for Irish Celts, cf. *Old Celtic Romances*, by P. W. Joyce. Tennyson's *Voyage of Maeldune*, is founded on one of the stories in this collection.

Lady Charlotte Guest's edition of *The Mabinogion* is the most complete; *The Boys' Mabinogion*, by Sidney Lanier, will be found convenient with class.

W. F. Skene's *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, two volumes, contains Cymric poems attributed to the bards of the sixth century.

2. EARLY ENGLISH. Good examples of early English poetry will be found in Longfellow's *Poets and Poetry of Europe*. Note particularly *The Exile's Complaint*, *The Grave*, *The Soul's Complaint against the Body*, and *The Ruined Wall-Stone*. There are also extracts from the longer poems. (This is a good collection for class of younger students.) *The Seafarer*, *The Fortunes of Man*, opening of Cædmon's *Creation*, etc., will be found in Morley's *English Writers*, vol. ii. *The Seafarer* is also in *Illustrations of English Religion*, edited by Morley, in Cassell's Library of English Literature, and in the appendix to *Early English Literature* of Stopford A. Brooke. See also Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Literature*. For Beowulf, *The Deeds of Beowulf*, John Earle, Clarendon Press (prose translation), and *Beowulf*, metrical line for line translation, by J. M. Garnett (Ginn & Co.). Professor John Lesslie Hall's translation (D. C. Heath & Co.), is both rhythmical and alliterative. For Cædmon, Thorpe's *Metrical Paraphrase* gives translation with text. William of Malmesbury's account of *Aldhelm*, and Cuthbert's *Letter on the Death of Bede*, are given in Morley's *Library of English Literature*, and interesting extracts from the prefaces of King Alfred will be found in Earle's *Anglo-Saxon Literature*.



3. CRITICISM AND HISTORY OF LITERATURE. Azarias' *Development of English Literature—Old English Period*, Ten Brink's *Early English Literature*. *The Englishman and the Scandinavian*, by Frederick Metcalfe, compares the Early English and Norse literatures. *The History of Early English Literature*, by Rev. Stopford A. Brooke. Translations of early poems in this book are especially concise and spirited.

4. HISTORY. Green's *Making of England*, Green's *Conquest of England*. On extent of admixture of English and Celt, a question much discussed, consult Matthew Arnold's *Celtic Literature*; Huxley's article on *Some Fixed Points in British Ethnology*, in *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 177; Isaac Taylor's *Words and Places*; Henry Morley's article on *The Celtic Element in English Literature*, in *Clement Marot and Other Essays*.

### III. THE NORMAN CONQUEST

The conquest of England by the Normans in 1066 brought a new and powerful influence into English life and literature. The Normans, or Northmen, were originally a mixed horde of piratical adventurers from Scandinavia and Denmark, who had won a country for themselves in the north of France.\* Enterprising, quick-witted, open to new ideas, this race of born rulers did more than seize upon some of the fairest lands of southern Europe; wherever it went it appropriated much that was best in the civilization of those it subdued. The fur-clad and half-savage Northmen, whose black, square-sailed ships crowded up the Seine after Rollo, were heathen freebooters. The Normans who conquered England a century and a half later were the most courtly, cultured, art-loving, and capable race in Europe. In origin they

\* V. Table of Races, note p. 12, *supra*.

were Teutonic, like the English ; yet so completely had they adopted and, in some respects, improved the civilization of the Gaul and the Roman, that scarcely an outward trace of their origin remained. After establishing themselves in Normandy they had rapidly acquired the corrupt Latin of the region and transformed it into a literary language. "They found it a barbarous jargon, they fixed it in writing, and they employed it in legislation, in poetry, in romance.\* They became Christians, and eagerly absorbed the learning which the Church had brought with it, encouraging such scholars as Lanfranc and Anselm to settle among them. They built splendid castles and cathedrals ; they were foremost in instituting chivalry. Their poets, or *trouvères*, chanted long knightly songs of battle, love, and heroism—*Chansons de Gestes*,† as they are called—that in style and spirit were not Scandinavian, but French and southern. Coming from the cruder heroism of the vanishing Teutonic age into this Norman world of the eleventh century, we feel that life has adorned itself with a new courtliness, gayety, and affluence. The northern hardness and repression have softened under the fructifying breath of a

\* V. Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. i. pp. 21-22.

† "*Chansons de Gestes*, songs of families, as the term literally means, are poems describing the history and achievements of the great men of France in early times. *Geste* has three senses—(1) The deeds (*gesta*) of a hero ; (2) the poem illustrating those deeds ; (3) the family of the hero, and the set of poems celebrating it."—Saintsbury's *Primer of French Literature*, p. 3.

warmer air, heavy with romance and the odors of the pleasure-loving South. From the somber shadows of an antique world, with the Titanic shapes of its hero-sagas, we approach the sunshine and the shifting colors, the movement and the blazonry, of the Romantic Middle Age. The Normans had become leaders in this new world, largely through that extraordinary adaptability, that readiness to receive and utilize fresh impressions which was characteristic of their race ; but the followers of William the Conqueror were far from being pure Teutons, even in blood. In France the invading Northmen had intermarried with the native population, which was largely Celtic, and the two races mixed as the English and Celt did in parts of England.\* “ The indomitable vigor of the Scandinavian, joined to the buoyant vivacity of the Gaul, produced the ruling and conquering race of Europe.” † With William, too, was a motley following of adventurers from many parts of France, so that through the Conquest the Celtic blood, this time mixed with that of other races, mingled a second time with that of the English. But more important than the strain of Celtic blood that flowed in with the Norman, is the nature of the civilization the Norman carried with him. However closely he may have been bound by descent to the Teutonic North, the tone of the Norman civilization was essentially French and Roman. From the time when Harold fell among the heap of English dead at Hastings to the time when

\* *V. supra*, p. 17.

† Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. i. p. 170.

the genius and the speech of English and Norman were wedded in the poetry of Chaucer, our attention is centered upon the struggle for precedence in language and in literature between the Norman and the English, and upon the final but modified triumph of the native over the intruding foreign type. In the period immediately following the Norman Conquest the lines of distinction between conquerors and conquered are sharply drawn. England is in the mailed hand of the king and his barons; the king is the Duke of Normandy, the barons Norman barons. Separate at first, yet side by side, are two races—Norman and English: two languages—Norman and English. The great bulk of the upper or land-owning class was made up of Norman; the Norman tower, massive, square, obdurate, rose throughout the land, and forced home on every Englishman the hated fact of a foreign rule. But a dominion of a less tangible but no less actual kind came with the Norman Conqueror; the leadership in thought and scholarship and literature passed quietly under the control of the foreigner. In the earlier half of the eleventh century, while learning languished in England, it was making rapid advances in the schools of Normandy and of France. The Conquest linked England to a nation which was then taking a leading part in the intellectual movement of the time; it laid the bridge by which the culture of the Continent passed over. The monasteries continued to be the great springs of education and of literature, but by the Conquest the monasteries themselves had

The Latin  
writers.



passed very largely into the hands of the foreigner, so that the intellectual life of the nation was thus influenced at its very source by an alien and higher culture. As the English earl was replaced by the Norman baron, so in many cases the great English dignitaries of the Church were superseded by Norman or foreign scholars. Thus Lanfranc was taken from the monastic school at Bec, then famous for the part it was taking in the intellectual revival in Normandy, and made Archbishop of Canterbury. From Bec, too, came Anselm, to be Lanfranc's successor in the archbishopric, a man of rare holiness, purity, and gentleness, as well as one of the deepest thinkers of his time. Thus, during the period succeeding the Conquest, foreign scholarship did much to lift up the tone of education in England, which, especially during the early half of the eleventh century, had fallen very low. These foreign scholars were writers as well as teachers, and we owe to them, directly or indirectly, a considerable mass of prose literature on theological, historical, and even scientific subjects. The absolute contrast which this work presents, in both form and object, to that of Alfred, some two centuries before, brings clearly before us the new condition of affairs. The aim of the great English king had been the spread of learning among the English people, by giving them the best works he knew in the English speech. The men of the later revival wrote as scholars addressing scholars. They employed Latin, then the universal language of learning throughout Europe, while the speech of Alfred was fading out of literature,



having enough to do to keep itself alive at all as the spoken language of a subject people. Among the most important works of this Latin prose are those which deal with English history. Anglo-Norman or Latin *Chronicles*, so called to distinguish them from the English or Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*, which they gradually superseded, are kept at the different monasteries, or sometimes, later, composed by writers brought in living contact with public affairs by a residence at the court. Thus in the twelfth century we find such famous historians as William of Malmesbury (*cir.* 1095-6-1142 ?), Odericus Vitalis (1075-*cir.* 1141-1142), and Henry of Huntingdon (*cir.* 1084-1154), whose works continue to furnish materials to the English historians of the present day. These chroniclers were not always foreigners, although they followed the foreign fashion of writing their histories in Latin ; their work ends with Matthew Paris, the last and greatest of the chroniclers at St. Albans, who died in 1259.

The poetry as well as the scholarship of Normandy came into England in the train of the Conqueror. The Norman abbot ruled in the monastery, the Norman poet, or *trouvère*, wandered from castle to castle, singing the *chanson* of Norman chivalry in the Norman-French of the conquering race. When we read how, at the battle of Hastings, the *jongleur* Taillefer chanted the song of Roland, the famous Paladin of Charlemagne, throwing up his sword and catching it again with all the dexterity of his craft, the scene sticks in our imagination as something dramatic and typical.

Anglo-Norman poetry.

At present we can only speak of this Norman-French poetry in the most general terms, as we are concerned only with its broad relations to the development of English literature. Some of these poems were long histories in verse, as the *Estoire des Englois*, a chronicle of the early English kings, of Geoffrey Gaimar, a Norman *trouvère*. Others were romances on the Trojan War, on the adventures of Charlemagne and his Court, on Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, or on Alexander the Great. Groups of poems, Cycles of Romance, as they are called, grew up around these favorite themes ; and some of these, current at first among the French-speaking classes, were translated into English during the latter part of the thirteenth century, or furnished the materials for English poems. In this way did the romantic sentiment, the splendor and bravery of the French chivalry, sink deep into the thought and imagination of the English, becoming truly a part of the nation's mental life. So that when Chaucer and Gower wrote, a century later, it had become part of the intellectual inheritance they received from their fathers, and found a beautiful and natural expression in their works. Nor was the Norman the only foreign literature that came to enrich and quicken English poetry during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Before the Norman Conquest, whatever intellectual impulse came to England from without had come through the Church ; now there arose throughout Europe a chorus of melody which was the prelude to the great modern literature, and in remote England, at least the echo of this melody was

to be more and more clearly heard. The *troubadour* in the south of France sang his love-songs as the *trouvère* of the north chanted his *chansons* of knightly deeds, and Richard I. (1189–1199) the lover of this southern, or Provençal poetry, quickened by his patronage of it “the love of song in courtly Englishmen.” \*

Celtic literature brought from its own store of legends the germ of the Arthurian romances, and we could have no better illustration of the appropriation of foreign elements which characterized this time than is presented by the evolution of this epic of Arthur. The Welsh chronicler, Geoffrey of Monmouth, relates the story among others in his fabulous *History of British Kings* (1147), it thence passes into French verse and is retold by the Norman *trouvère*, Geoffrey Gaimar; then Wace, another *trouvère*, makes a version of it in which the Round Table appears, probably gathered by him from Breton legends. The subject grows in popularity; traditions and personages at first entirely distinct are swept into the current that circles with ever increasing volume about the heroic figure of the half-mythical Celtic king—the white-bearded Merlin, the Breton story of Tristram and Isolde, Lancelot, who was to hold so large a place in the story in its later forms. Walter Map, a brilliant Welshman at the court of Henry II., is generally supposed to have been the first to combine the story, in a Latin history which has not been preserved, with the legend of the Holy Grail, or cup used at the Last Supper. After

\* Morley's *English Writers*, iii. 151.

all these experiences, the story at last found its way into English, in the *Brut*, or *Chronicle* of Layamon, a poem of which we shall speak presently. Thus the work of chronicler, *trouvère*, and court poet, freighted with rich spoils from other literatures, becomes at last an English possession, a great treasure-house to English poets down to our own time, when Matthew Arnold has retold us the story of *Tristram and Iseult* and Tennyson given us his *Idylls of the King*.

Underneath all the weight of this foreign society that encrusted the surface of life, that glittered in

**The English.** conspicuous places, apparently dominant in the Church and in the state, lay the great bulk of the population, still obstinately English. Underneath the upper stratum of society, with its foreign speech and its foreign literature, the English people still clung tenaciously to their mother-tongue ; still preserved, if in a feeble and somewhat intermittent way, their own native literature. Politically the Norman conquered England ; but in fact, during the two centuries that followed Hastings, England conquered the Norman, taking to her use such materials from his language and literature as pleased her, yet keeping the essence of her language and national genius substantially unchanged. It was the singular fate of the Norman to adopt for a second time the language of a nation he had subdued. He conquered in France and exchanged a Teutonic for a Romance speech ; he conquered in England only to unlearn his Romance speech for our Teutonic English. The Norman genius was pliable and imitative ; the English genius had that same inflexible persist-



ence which in modern times has enabled the Englishman to force his language and civilization on nations at the very ends of the earth. How, then, did the English literature survive during the long years when the Norman was first in the land; how did it reassert at last its lost supremacy?

From the Norman Conquest to the reign of John (1199-1216) English maintained itself with difficulty as a written language. Yet English literature after the Conquest. enough written English of this period has drifted down to us to show that even as a written language it was not wholly crowded out by its more fashionable rivals, but was rather holding its own until better times. The English *Chronicle*, written in a language which bears hardly a trace of foreign influence, extends to 1154, with but a short break during the turbulent reign of Stephen. Besides this we have various indications of an undercurrent of English literature, such as versions of the Psalter, the quaint proverbial poem *The Sayings of Alfred* in the reign of Henry II. (1154-1189), and scraps and snatches of English popular song embedded in the Latin histories of the time. Yet when we have pieced together such relics of an English literature as diligent search can discover, the result is meager enough alongside of the great volume of French and Latin which represents the chief literary activity of the time.

When we reach the reign of John we note the signs of change. The year 1204 saw, through the loss of Normandy, the severing of those ties which united England to a Continental power; in the year



1205 English poetry arose, as from the depths of a remote past, in the *Brut* of Layamon. Thus, strangely enough, the end of a foreign rule in England, and the rebirth of a true English poetry are almost exactly contemporaneous. We know nothing of Layamon but what he tells us in the opening lines of his poem. He was a parish priest in North Worcestershire, and dwelt at Earnley (now Areley Regis) on the banks of the Severn. There it came to him in mind and in his chief thought that he would tell the noble deeds of the English ; so he got books, among others the *Romans de Brut* of Wace, on which his own *Brut* is largely based. How near we get to the life of this simple-minded scholar, how truly human and real he seems to us, when we read : “Layamon laid before him three books, and turned over the leaves ; lovingly he beheld them, may the Lord be merciful to him.”\* Layamon’s *Brut* is a profuse history of Britain during those good days before the coming of the English, which Celtic patriotism had overlaid with mythical incidents, finding in them a very pleasure ground of the imagination. It begins with Æneas, telling how his descendant Brutus came to occupy the “winsome land of Britain,” and comes down to Cadwallon, who was called the last of the British kings. In the unwieldy narrative are the stories of Loerine, King Lear, and King Arthur, destined to be made famous by the genius of later times. Let us look for a moment at the significance of this extraordinary poem. From one aspect it is almost like a voice from the England of Cædmon

\* Layamon’s *Brut* ; with literal translation by Sir F. Madden.

or of Cynewulf. Its language is well-nigh wholly English, scholars having detected only about fifty Norman words in its thirty-two thousand lines. Its spirit, too, is often English, as where the verse warms with the old fighting rage of the true English battle song. Yet from another aspect the poem shows no less clearly the tinge of those foreign elements which had come to color life and literature. The subject, drawn from Norman and Celtic sources, is the glory not of English but of British heroes. The work, as a whole, suggests to us that the union of those elements which are to make the England of the future, has already begun. "Layamon stands upon the dividing line between two great periods, which he unites in a singular manner. He once more reproduces for us an age that is forever past; at the same time he is the first English poet to draw from French sources, the first to sing of King Arthur in English verse." \*

From the time of Layamon the English language struggles forward to a greater place in literature. By this time the old rivalry between English and Norman had passed away, Revival of English. the superiority of the English in mere numbers, together with the loss of Normandy, which confined the interests of both races within the limits of the island, told more and more in favor of a national unity. So, although in Henry III.'s reign, one influential Norman tries hard to make French the exclusive language of literature, numbers and persistence pushed English literature more and more to the front.

\* Ten Brink, *Early English Literature*, p. 193.

We may not pause to speak of the works that mark this advance, the religious books, such as the *Ormulum* (cir. 1215), a versification of the daily service, followed by a brief sermon, the *Ancren Riwele*, or Rule of Anchoresses (cir. 1225); but we must remember that it is toward the latter part of this thirteenth century that the French romances appear in an English dress,\* a fact significant of the increasing importance of the English speech. Yet it was not a pure but a composite language that was to be the standard English of the future, and these romances show an increasingly large proportion of French words. So on every side we see that this period of preparation, which is to lead to our language and our literature, is drawing to an end.

So far we have spoken only of the *written* literature of the English language during this Anglo-Norman time, but we must remember that in these early days when printing was undreamed of, manuscripts costly, and reading and writing unusual accomplishments, a great part of a nation's literature, and of its best mental life, lay outside the comparatively narrow circle of books. When we get fairly out of doors, leaving the *trouvère* or *jongleur* in the baron's hall, leaving the monk scribe in his monastery, bending over his rolls of parchment, we come at last face to face with the people. The world of books does not yet exist for them, yet they, too, have a literature: for history—tradition and legend; for poetry—the lilt of ballad and song. There the

Popular  
poetry.

\* See p. 54, *supra*.

childlike wonder or terror of their superstitious fancies, their strong primitive emotions, find their direct and natural, if somewhat crude and primitive, expression. The whole soul of the nation goes out into them. In our day the thousands go to the newspaper or the novel for their sensations. Then the people were glad to crowd about some wandering gleeman by the wayside, or in the village alehouse. Then, huddled at dusk about the winter's fire, the country folk whispered the old wives' talk of elf and ghost and goblin; then, from

“The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,”

from the plowman in his furrow, or the milkmaid bringing home her pail, arose the music of the popular song. It seems probable that the Norman Conquest made no break in this English popular literature. We know that a little scrap of song ascribed to Canute was kept alive by oral tradition from his time to the days of Henry II.,\* when a chronicler chanced to preserve it in his history. Doubtless there were thousands of popular songs which never found their way into the written literature, and gradually perished on the people's lips. In prose a defiant patriotism delights in stories of Hereward, the English outlaw, and of how he held out in the Fens against the Conqueror, or, later, legend and ballad cluster about the outlawed Robin Hood. These rude

\* “Merie sungen the munaches binnan Ely,” etc. (Pleasantly sang the monks in Ely). Morley's *English Writers*, iii. p. 240. The story is told by Thomas of Ely, who wrote a history of his monastery to 1107.

rhymes, probably dating back as far as the thirteenth century, are the very breath of the popular spirit. Robin Hood is their hero; he embodies the English hatred of the Norman rule, their love of a free and manly life in the merry greenwood, their delight in archery, in ale, in singlestick, and shrewd strokes. This popular hero hoodwinks sheriffs and defies the law, yet he has the courtesy, fairness, and gentleness that appeal to the English heart. He suffers no woman to be molested; "poor men's goods he spared, abundantly relieving them with that which by theft he got from abbeys and the houses of the rich earls." And in these ballads we get out into the sunshine and free air, by little artless touches that tell us of lives at home under the open sky.

"When shaws \* been sheene, and shradds † full fayre,  
And leaves both large and longe,  
Itt is merrie walking in the fayre forrést  
To heare the small birdes songe." ‡

The famous Cuckoo Song, composed before 1240, has a yet fresher breath of nature; the lines have caught the rhythm of that buoyant pleasure that sets the blood dancing in the spring:

"Summer is a-coming in.  
Loud sing cuckoo :  
Groweth seed and bloweth mead  
And springeth the wood now.  
Sing cuckoo, cuckoo.

\* *Shaws*, etc., "Woods are shining."

† *Shradds*, perhaps "swards."

‡ *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*.



Ewe bleateth after lamb,  
Cow after calf calls,  
Bullock sterteth, buck verteth [jumps],  
Merry sing cuckoo.  
Cuckoo, cuckoo, well sings the cuckoo.  
So sweet you never knew,  
Sing cuckoo now, sing cuckoo.\*

So under the crust of the Norman *chanson* or romance, or under the Latin of the scholastics, we find the true English literature, flowing like a fresh and living stream under the ice which will melt at last into its moving waters.

#### IV.—THE MAKING OF THE LANGUAGE

After the Conquest French was the language of the court and ruling classes in England, and, with a few exceptions, it became that of literature. English was despised by the polished Norman as the barbarous tongue of a conquered people. The mass of English still used it, but as it almost ceased to be a written or literary language, many words not used in ordinary speech were lost from its vocabulary. For a time Norman-French and English in its various dialects continued in use, side by side, as distinct languages, but it cannot have been very long before the Normans who had permanently settled in England began to learn the native speech. The two races grew closer together, and, by the loss of Normandy in 1204, the connection with a foreign and French-speaking power was broken. Parisian French had indeed come with the Plantagenet kings; during the reigns of John (1199–1216) and Henry III. (1216–1272) it was

\* The song as here given is in modernized English.

the fashion at court, and for some time later it continued to be the language of state documents, of society, education, and the courts of law. Yet, in spite of this, English began to be more generally employed by the French-speaking people outside of court circles. A writer of the latter part of the thirteenth century declares: "For unless a man knows French people regard him little; but the low men hold to English and to their own speech still."\*

By the fourteenth century this stubborn "holding to English" had made the triumph of that language certain. The Hundred Years' War against France, begun in Edward III.'s reign (1327-1377), may have helped to bring French into disfavor, and hastened, but not caused, the more general use of English. By 1339 English instead of French was employed in nearly all the schools as the medium of instruction.

In 1362 Parliament passed an act providing that the pleadings in the law courts should henceforth be in English, "because the laws, customs, and statutes of this realm, be not commonly known in the same realm, for that they be pleaded, showed, and judged in the French tongue."†

But while French was being thus given up, there was as yet no one national English established and understood throughout the whole of England. One kind of English was spoken in the north, another in the middle districts, and a third in the south, and even these three forms were split up into further dialects. These three dialects are commonly known

\* Robert of Gloucester's *Rhyming Chronicle*, Cir. 1298.

† Lounsbury's *English Language*, p. 54.

as the Northern, Midland, and Southern English. During the latter part of the fourteenth century the East Midland English, or that spoken in and about London, which was in the eastern part of the Midland district, asserted itself above the confusion and gradually became accepted as the national speech. Midland English had an importance as the language of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as that of the capital and the court, but its supremacy was rather due to its being made the language of literature. The language of Wyclif's translation of the Bible (1380), a variety of this Midland form, is plainly the parent of the noble Bible English of our later versions. The poet John Gower (1330-1408) gave up the use of French and Latin to write in the *King's* or Court English, and, more than all, it was in this same East Midland English of the Court that Geoffrey Chaucer wrote the poems which became so widely read. These works gave to East Midland English a supremacy which it never lost.

Now this East Midland dialect was not a pure English; for there, as elsewhere, the local variety of the native speech had been modified by a large infusion of French. When, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the tendency toward a general adoption of English grew too strong to be resisted, that English was neither the Anglo-Saxon of an earlier time, nor a mere outgrowth of it, but a Frenchified tongue. The language of Chaucer was thus a mixed language, in its foundations of grammar and construction still substantially English, in its vocabulary showing a considerable

infusion of French. By the establishment of this composite speech the influence of the Norman Conquest on the language was made lasting, so that the effect of the French rule in England remains deeply stamped on the English we speak and write to-day. *Castle, chivalry, royal, robe, coronation, debonair, courtesy*, such stately words our homelier English owes to the French and Latin. Just as the English race was improved during the preparatory period by its mixture first with the Celt, and then with the partially Celtic followers of the Conqueror, so by its mixture with French the English language was made more rich and flexible.

Many elements had thus combined in this composite England, and the way was made clear for a great poet who could lay the foundations of a truly national literature and language. That poet was Geoffrey Chaucer.

## STUDY LIST

### *FROM NORMAN CONQUEST TO CHAUCER*

This period contains little literature suited for the study of any but advanced classes. A few references, however, are given for those who wish to gain something more than a second-hand knowledge of the time.

1. OLD FRENCH LITERATURE. *Specimens of Old French* (IX.-XV. Centuries) with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary by Paget Toynbee, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, is a useful handbook and contains full bibliographical references, valuable literary information, etc. Aubertin, *Histoire de la Langue et de la Littérature Française au Moyen Âge*; Van Laun's *French Literature*, Saintsbury's *Primer of French Literature*, Fortier's *Histoire de la Littérature Française*.



2. **ANGLO-LATIN POEMS, ETC.** *Apocalypse of Goliath* is given in translation in Cassell's Library of English Literature, *Shorter English Poems*, edited by H. Morley. *The Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, collected and edited by Thomas Wright. M. A., Camden Society, 1841, gives Latin text and translation with introduction. *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poetry of the Twelfth Century*, edited by Thomas Wright; H. Morley's *Early English Prose Romances*, Carisbrooke Library (contains seven specimens); Ellis' *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*. For Walter Map, v. Green's *History of the English People*, vol. i. p. 173-175.

3. **LAYAMON.** *Layamon's Brut, or Chronicle of Britain; a poetical semi-Saxon paraphrase of the Brut of Wace*, edited by Sir Frederic Madden, 3 vols., published by Society of Antiquarians, London, 1847. Text with translation, notes, and grammatical glossary. Morley's *English Writers*, iii. 203 *et seq.*, includes extract from the *Brut*.

4. **GESTA ROMANORUM.** This has been edited by Thomas Wright; it has also appeared in Knickerbocker Nugget Series, translated by C. Swan, and in several other popular editions.

5. **LAWRENCE MINOT.** War poems are given in Cassell's Library of English Literature, *Shorter English Poems*, edited by Morley.

6. **CELTIC.** Stephen's *Literature of the Kymrie* (tenth and twelfth century). See also study list, pp. 46, 47, *supra*, *Studies in the Arthurian Legend*, by John Rhys, M. A., Clarendon Press.

7. **HISTORY AND LITERATURE.** *Norman Britain*, in Early Britain Series; *The Story of the Normans*, by S. O. Jewett (Story of the Nations Series); Green's *History of the English People*, vol. i.; Morley's *English Writers*, vol. iii., covers period from Conquest to Chaucer. Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. v. ch. xxv. ("Effects of Norman Conquest on Language and Literature,"), H. Hall's *Court Life under the Plantagenets*, Church's *Life of St. Anselm*, H. W. Preston's *Troubadour and Trouvère*, J. O. Halliwell Phillipps' *The Thornton Romances*.



## CHAPTER II

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340(?) - 1400)

### CHAUCER'S CENTURY

To enter into the poetry of Chaucer, and to understand how vast an influence it had on the development of our language and literature, we must try to imagine ourselves back in the England of his time. Instead of the rich and well-ordered beauty which in modern England bears witness to centuries of patient cultivation, we are in a land but partly reclaimed from its original wildness. Dense growths of woodland, the haunt of the deer, the gray wolf, the boar, and the wild bull, stretch uninterruptedly for miles and miles. There are some seventy of these great forests in Chaucer's England, survivals of the primeval growth which had once almost covered the island. In other places, as in the low-lying fenland in the shires of Lincoln, Cambridge, or Somerset, are sodden regions of marsh, darkened at certain seasons by huge flights of heron, "trailing it, with legs and wings." All through the land rises the solid masonry of the Norman castle, the noble beauty of cathedral or abbey; for the world is still feudal and monastic. In the open and fertile places stand the manor-houses of the great proprietors, in the midst

of acres of plowland and pasture; and huddled together a little apart are the squalid hovels of the laborers. Here life moves within a fixed and contracted orbit, shut up in seclusion or held to a dreary monotony of toil. Into such a life the traveling "minstrel," with his old-time romance of Arthur, Sir Isebras, or the Tale of Troy, or the *jongleur*, with his sleight-of-hand tricks and posture-making, brought a welcome breath of the great world without. The people themselves find relief in a childlike abandonment to outbursts of boisterous merry-making. Hunger, oppression, and the cruel indifference of the great are heavy on the poor; yet at times, as when in the springtime pent-up youth breaks out of the stifling air of smoky cities to do observance to May, with hawthorn boughs and dance and song, we feel our pulses quicken with the light-hearted mirth of that merry England which lives in the buoyancy of Chaucer's verse. Again, as we pass in imagination through Chaucer's England, we find a hint of the insecurity of this mediæval world in the walls that shut in the dwellers in the towns from outside danger. At Newcastle-on-Tyne, near the Scotch border, where marauding bands swoop down as the Douglas did against the Percys, a hundred armed citizens keep nightly watch on the walls. London itself, except on the side toward the river, is still a walled town. Within, between rows of low wood-and-plaster houses, jostles and traffics that gayly colored world that lights up Chaucer's canvas. The streets are narrow and unpaved, and foul with heaps of refuse, but beyond the city gates are lanes leading

out through fair meadow lands, where the tender green of the spring grass is starred by the daisies that Master Chaucer loves to greet and honor. A stone bridge, with houses built on either side of its narrow roadway, connects Chaucer's London with Southwark, on the opposite side of the Thames. Here are fields and gardens and the round wooden buildings for bearbaiting or cockfighting; here, near the end of the bridge, is the old Tabard Inn, in whose square courtyard motley companies of pilgrims are wont to gather on their way to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, at Canterbury.

But under this quiet mediæval garb, we note on every hand the signs of coming change. England, like the rest of Europe, was growing impatient of the cramped life and restricted thought of an earlier time; she was already throbbing with that new life which was to find expression in the Renaissance. The old mediæval world yet remained, but everywhere in the midst of its most characteristic institutions we can see the beginning of the new order destined to take its place.

Thus chivalry, by which in the Middle Ages the mere barbarian fighter of earlier times became the knight, was at the height of its splendor.

Our first great poet lived and breathed in the very air of knightly romance, he knew in his youth the dazzling and luxurious court of the third Edward, a king who delighted in the display of tournaments and who founded the Order of the Garter. As we read of Sir John Chandos and of Bertrand du

Guesclin in Froissart's *Chronicles of the Hundred Years' War*,\* this brilliant and lavish reign seems crowded with knightly feats. Yet, mediæval as this world of Chaucer seems to us, as we imagine the gray turrets of its moated castles, the streaming plumes, the shining armor, and all the picturesque pageantry of its real or mimic war, agencies were at work undermining the whole fabric of its chivalry. Gunpowder, first used in Europe at the battle of Crécy in 1346, was destined to revolutionize the mode of warfare, and help to make castle and armor things of the past.

In England new forces were active in the mass of the people, which threatened to change the whole order of society. In 1349, England was desolated by a loathsome and deadly plague, the Black Death, through which about half the **Socialism.** entire population miserably perished. The farms were untilled, the crops scanty, and famine followed pestilence. The country was filled with vagrants driven by idleness and starvation to beggary or theft. The organization of labor was unsettled, and iron laws were passed which made matters worse. Then came bitter denunciations and riotous uprisings against all those class distinctions which had been accepted almost as part of the divinely arranged order.

John Ball, the mad priest of Kent, thundered against those who "are clothed in rich stuffs, ornamented with ermine, who dwell in fine houses while

\* *The Hundred Years' War* (1338-1453), a war between France and England.

we must brave the wind and rain in our labors in the fields."\* Our dream of fourteenth century chivalry is thus broken by the stormy complaint of the poor, the prelude of modern democracy.

In religion, too, the century is full of signs of a coming change. The Church no longer inspired that devotion which characterized the days of the earlier crusader. In 1309 the Pope removed from Rome to Avignon, and the reverence and divinity which had hedged him about, as the declared "Vicar of Christ on Earth," were greatly lessened when men saw him the creature of the growing power of France. The multiplying corruptions in the Church itself, the sordidness and lack of spirituality in its clergy, moved earnest men to scorn and satire. In all this we see signs of the coming Reformation.

The old scholastic learning of the Middle Ages yet lingered in Chaucer's England. The Oxford Clerk, in the *Canterbury Tales*, delights in Aristotle, an author of first importance in the old education of the monastic schools. Yet a new learning has already arisen in Italy, and in the work of Chaucer himself has entered English literature. Twenty years before the birth of Chaucer, Dante—the first supremely great poet since the classic writers—had died in exile in Ravenna, leaving for all time the expression of the soul of mediæval Christendom in the *Divine Comedy*. When Chaucer was a year old, Petrarch, the sonneteer of Laura, a poet and scholar who was a great

\* Froissart.



leader in the new way of feeling and thinking, was crowned with laurel at Rome. Boccaccio was pouring out, in the prose tales of his *Decamerone*, the world's new delight in the beauty and good things of this life.

This threefold change, which marked the breaking up of the mediæval and the beginning of the modern world, expressed itself in England in the works of three great writers. The social movement found its mouthpiece in William Langland, 1332-1400; the new religious spirit in Wyclif, while the new learning of Italy enters into the verse of Geoffrey Chaucer (cir. 1340-1400).

The well-nigh hopeless cry of the people against the social evils and a corrupt Church goes up in the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, of Langland. The poet falls asleep and sees in a vision the world—his distracted English world—as a “fair field full of folk.” There are plowmen, the fruit of whose toil the gluttons waste; men in rich apparel, chafferers, lawyers who will not open their mouths except for gold, pardoners from Rome, who traffic with the people for pardons, and divide with the parish priest the silver of the poor. The world makes a pilgrimage to seek Truth, and finds a guide in Piers, a plowman, at work in the fields. He bids them wait until he has finished his half-acre, then he will lead them. “The equality of all men before God, the gospel of labor—these are the two great doctrines found in this poem.” \*

Langland's  
“Piers  
Plowman.”

In religion John Wyclif, by his fearless attack on

\* Green's *History of the English People*, vol. i. p. 442.

the ill-gotten wealth and corruptions of the Church, by certain of his religious doctrines, and **John Wyclif.** by his translation of the Bible (1380), stands as the greatest mouthpiece of the new spirit and the herald of the Reformation. Wyclif, too, by giving up the Latin of the mediæval schoolmen, and speaking directly to the people in homely English, shows us that learning was ceasing to be the exclusive possession of priest and clerk.

Finally, the new learning of Italy colors the verse of Chaucer, and mingles with its mediæval hues.

**Chaucer.** In his work, more than in that of any other writer, this crowded fourteenth century survives for us. There, indeed, its men and women breathe and act before us—alive veritably to-day beyond the power of five centuries of time and change.

#### GEOFFREY CHAUCER.—1340 (?)—1400

Our knowledge of Chaucer's life is meager and fragmentary ; many points are uncertain, and much left to conjecture. Yet Chaucer is real to us through his books, and the little we do know of his life is remarkably significant of its general character.

Geoffrey Chaucer, the son of John Chaucer, a wine merchant on Thames Street, was born in London about 1340. As a boy he learned something of the court, for he was page in the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward III. As a youth he knew something of war and camps, for he took part in a campaign in France in 1359, probably as an esquire, was taken prisoner and

ransomed. Attached to the court, he was sent on diplomatic missions to various foreign countries. In 1373 he went to Genoa to arrange a commercial treaty, and remained in Italy about a year. By this, and by a later journey to Italy, he was brought directly under the influence of that new learning which was to re-create the mind of Europe. Here, too, he probably met Petrarch, its greatest living representative. Two years later he was given a position in the custom house at London. In 1386 he was returned to Parliament as Knight of the Shire of Kent, but in the same year lost his place as Comptroller of the Customs, in the absence of his patron, John of Gaunt—the “time-honored Lancaster” of Shakespeare’s *Richard II*. For a while he knew poverty, bearing it with characteristic good humor. On the accession (1399) of Henry IV., the son of his former patron, his fortunes again improved; he was granted an annuity of forty marks, but died on the 25th of the October following; closing the eyes which had seen so much, in his quiet home at Westminster, while the dawn grows over Europe and the new century is born.

Little as we know of Chaucer, we can see at how many points he touched the varied and brilliant life of his time, knowing it not merely as an onlooker, but as a practical man of **Man of the world.** affairs, himself an actor in its restless activities. He was a man of the world, but one who added to the quick eye and retentive mind the poet’s tenderness and sympathy with suffering, the philosopher’s large-minded toleration of human follies and

mistakes. And Chaucer, like Shakespeare, learned not only from life, but from books. He  
**Student.** would return from his work at the custom house to read until his eyes were "dazed and dull." We may agree with Lowell that in Chaucer's description of the Oxford Clerk the poet writes out of the fullness of a personal sympathy.

"For he hadde gotten him yit no benefice,  
 Ne was so worldly for to have office.  
 For him was levere have at his beddes heede  
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reede,  
 Of Aristotle and his philosophie,  
 Then robes riche, or fithele or gay sawtrie."

Chaucer the poet had so absorbed the tales of *trouvère* and Italian, as to make them live anew in his verse on English soil. Chaucer the student translated Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* and wrote a scientific treatise on the astrolabe.\*

Lover of men and lover of books, Chaucer is no less  
**Love of** the lover of nature, for her alone delight-  
**nature.** ing to leave his studies.

"And as for me, though that I kon but lytee,  
 On bokes for to rede I me delyte,  
 And to hem yive I feyth and ful credence  
 And in myn herte have hem in reverence  
 So hertely, that ther is game noon,  
 That fro my bokës maketh me to goon,  
 But yt be seldom on the holy day,  
 Save, certeynly, when that the moneth of May

\* "The oldest work in England now known to exist on any branch of science."—*Craik's English Literature*, vol. i. p. 367.

Is comen, and that I here the foules synge  
 And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge,  
*Farewel my boke and my devocioun!*"\*

As we might expect, it is the gayer moods of nature in which Chaucer's light-hearted and kindly temperament finds the greatest solace. The characteristic Chaucerian landscape is glorious in sunshine, the grass grows soft and thick under our feet, and the twitter of birds is everywhere; all the world is new—washed in the freshness of the springtime.

"When shoures sweet of raine discended softe,  
 Causing the ground, fele times and ofte,  
 Up for to give many an wholesome aire,  
 And every plaine was eke yclothed faire  
 With newe green, and maketh smalle floures  
 To springen here and there in field and mede;  
 So very good and wholesome be the shoures,  
 That it renueth that was old and dede  
 In winter time; and out of every sede  
 Springeth the hearbe, so that every wight  
 Of this season wexeth full glad and light."†

Here is that vernal freshness which fills us in Chaucer with an ever new delight; the cheerful sun is rising, the east laughs with light, and in the groves the silver drops are yet

"honging on the leves."‡

Indeed, as our own Longfellow says:

"He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote  
 The Canterbury Tales, and his old age

\* Prologue to *Legende of Good Women*.

† *The Flower and the Leaf*, l. 4, etc.

‡ "The Knight's Tale," l. 638.



Made beautiful with song ; and, as I read  
 I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note  
 Of lark and linnet, and from every page  
 Rise odors of plowed field or flowery mead."\*

A love of the gladness and beauty of God's world, so childlike and spontaneous, rests and refreshes us. Something tells us that the life of the poet who felt thus was at heart sound and good. There are sacred depths in the rare nature of this seeming man of the world, who takes what life sends "in buxomnesse," who, unlike so many moderns, makes no display of what he is and feels. If we would get some hint of that side of Chaucer which was not "the world's side," let us think of him as he describes himself in one of his poems, going out alone into the meadows in the stillness of the early morning and falling on his knees to greet the daisy.

"The father of English poetry" knew no English masters in his art to whom he could turn for help.

Chaucer's  
works.

Chaucer's early training tended to identify him with the life and literary standards that then prevailed at court, and there both Edward III. and Queen Philippa favored the language and literature of France, even having French poets and "minstrels" in their employ. Among the court circles the old literature of England had no place. So pronounced was this foreign tone, that John Gower (1325(?)–1408), though English by birth, wrote *Ballades* and a poem called the *Speculum Meditantis* in French, apologizing for his shortcomings in language "*parceque je suis Anglais.*"

\* Sonnet on Chaucer.

Chaucer's spiritual lineage therefore does not carry us to Cædmon or Cynewulf, but to Guillaume de Lorris, Guillaume de Machault, and other poets of France. His studies carried him also to the Latin literature of England during the preceding centuries: Monmouth's *History of Britain*, or the caustic verse of Walter Map, and to Vergil, Ovid, and such other classical writers as were commonly known to the student of his time. The work of a young poet, produced under such conditions, and addressed to a courtly audience, French by taste as by literary tradition, could hardly fail to take color from such surroundings. Especially in his early poems, Chaucer is "an English *trouvère*." He begins his work as a translator or imitator of the French. A French devotional poem is the original of his *A. B. C.*; a famous French love poem of his *Romance of the Rose*; his *Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse* (1369), while not a translation, is distinctly French in poetic manner. But to the literary influences about Chaucer during the earlier half of his life another was to be added. By his two journeys to Italy (1372-73, 1378-79), the first undertaken when he was about thirty, Chaucer was brought into direct and vital contact with a mighty literature, the impact of which was from that time to be more and more strongly felt on the intellectual development of Europe. Hence in Chaucer's later works we find many results of his loving study of the three great masters of this rising literature of Italy. Thus, *Troilus and Cressida*, by far his longest poem, is largely based on Boccaccio's

*Filostrato*. The *House of Fame* contains reminiscences of Dante, while two of the finest of the *Canterbury Tales*, those told by the Knight and the Man of Law, are based respectively on works of Boccaccio and of Petrarch, "the laureat poet,"

" Whose rhetorique sweete  
Eulumyned al Ytale of poetrie."

But we must be careful not to think of Chaucer as a mere imitator or borrower. The literature of the world belongs to the supreme poet by right of eminent domain. What a great poet borrows is transformed by the personality of his individual genius. It is not merely because he lived and wrote in England that we think of Chaucer as inherently English, and feel that in spirit he is akin to the greatest and most representative poet of his race. Whether he borrowed from France or from Italy he made a story his own, re-creating it and breathing into it the breath of his own spirit. Like his nation, he is capacious and strong enough to take from others only to enrich without destroying his own individuality. Before Chaucer, there had been an Anglo-Norman literature, and the beginning of a popular English literature; but no great poet had yet combined the spirit of the two.

It is one of the glories of Chaucer that in his work so much is combined and harmonized for the first time. He has the Celtic lightness and humor with the English solidity and common sense; he has the literary traditions of the Norman *trouvère* with the new thought of the Italian; he expresses in his very

language the end of a period of amalgamation, and all these elements are made one by the power and personality of his genius.

No illustration of this could be better than that given by Lowell: "Chaucer, to whom French must have been almost as truly a mother-tongue as English, was familiar with all that has been done by *troubadour* or *trouvère*. In him we see the first result of the Norman yeast upon the home-baked Saxon loaf. The flour had been honest, the paste well kneaded, but the inspiring leaven was wanting till the Norman brought it over. Chaucer works still in the solid material of his race, but with what airy lightness has he not infused it? Without ceasing to be English, he has escaped from being insular." \*

Thus Chaucer in more than one way stands for the end of the period of preparation. Like his century he is partly of the Middle Ages and partly of the coming Renaissance, partly Norman and partly English; in his literary style as well as in his mixed language reminding us that he expresses the union of what had been separate elements, and that he is both the end of an old order and the beginning of a new.

#### THE "CANTEBURY TALES"

The latest and most famous work of Chaucer is a collection of separate stories, supposed to be told by pilgrims who agree to journey in company to the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. In a general

The "Canterbury Tales."

\* Essay on "Chaucer" in *My Study Windows*, by J. R. Lowell.

prologue we are told how these pilgrims met at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, the district opposite to London on the other side of the Thames ; how they agreed to be fellow-travelers ; how the jolly inn-keeper, "Harry Bailly," proposed that each pilgrim should tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two returning. There are, by way of interlude, prologues to the several stories thus told, which bind the whole series more firmly together and recall to us the general design. The idea of stringing distinct stories on some thread of connection is not an uncommon one. Shortly before Chaucer, Boccaccio had written his *Decamerone*, a collection of stories linked together by a very simple expedient. In it a number of gay lords and ladies leave Florence during the plague, and, sitting together in a beautiful garden, they amuse themselves by telling the tales that form the main part of the work. If Chaucer, as many suppose, found the suggestion for the plan of the *Canterbury Tales* in the *Decamerone*, there is no doubt that he greatly improved on his original. Chaucer's work is founded on a pilgrimage, one of the characteristic and familiar features of the life of the time. With rare tact he has selected one of the few occasions which brought together in temporary good-fellowship men and women of different classes and occupations. He is thus able to paint the moving life of the world about him in all its breadth and variety ; he can give to stories told by such chance-assorted companions a dramatic character and contrast, making knight, priest, or miller reveal himself in what he relates.



The chief interest of the Prologue lies in the freshness and truth with which each member of the little party of pilgrims is set before us. As one after another of that immortal procession passes by, the intervening centuries are forgotten, the world about us recedes, and we ourselves seem fourteenth century pilgrims riding with the rest. It is a morning in the middle of April as we with the jolly company, thirty in all, with our host of the Tabard, Harry Bailly, as "governour," pass out of the square courtyard of the inn and take the highroad toward Canterbury. The freshness of the spring is all about us ; showers and sunshine and soft winds have made the budding world beautiful in tender green, and the joy of the sweet season in the hearts of innumerable birds makes them put their gladness into song. This time, when the sap mounts in the trees, and the world is new-charged with the love of life, fills us with restless desires and the spirit of adventure.

"Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages."

Our little company is a strange mixture, men and women of many sorts and conditions. By traveling thus banded together the danger of attacks from highway robbers was lessened, and the holiday humor promoted by companionship. There rides a Knight, a good type of all that is best in the chivalry of the time, who has fought bravely in fifteen mortal battles. His hauberk is stained, for he has just returned from a voyage ; even the trappings of his horse are plain. In his bearing he is as meek as a maid. His son is with him, a gay young Squire, with

curled locks. He is a boy of twenty, overflowing with life and happiness, splendid in apparel, and expert in graceful accomplishments.

“ Embrowded was he, as it were a mede  
Al ful of fresshe floures, white and reede.  
Syngynge he was, or floytynge, al the day  
He was as fresshe as is the moneth of May.”

After the Knight and the Squire rides their attendant, clad in the green of the forester. He is the English Yeoman, type of those archers whose deadly “gray goose shafts” broke the shining ranks of knighthood at Crégy and Poitiers.\* A very different figure is Madame Eglantyne, a coy and smiling Prioress, a teacher of young ladies, whose table manners are a model of deportment, whose French smacks of the “school of Stratford atte Bowe.” She is so sensitive that she weeps to see a mouse caught in a trap. Though pleasant and amiable, she affects court manners, and holds herself on her dignity that people may stand in awe of her. There ambles the rich, pleasure-loving Monk, with his greyhounds; one of those new-fashioned churchmen of the day who have given up the strict monastic rule of an earlier time. He cares neither for learning nor to work with his hands, but delights in hunting.

The corruption of the Church is also to be seen in the next pilgrim, a brawny, jolly Friar, licensed to beg within a prescribed district. In the thirteenth century the friars, or brothers, had done great good

\* The passage on the Bow, in Green's *History of the English People*, vol. i. p. 421, may be read in class.

in England, but by Chaucer's time they had grown rich and had forgotten the high purposes for which the order was founded. The Friar has no threadbare scholar's dress ; his short cloak is of double worsted. His cowl is stuffed with knives and pins, for he is a peddler, like many of his order.\*

“ Ful sweetely herde he confessioun.  
And plesaunt was his absolucioun ;  
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce  
Ther as he wiste han a good pitaunce.”

After the Merchant, sitting high on his horse, and always solemnly talking of his gains, comes the Clerk with his lean horse, and threadbare cloak. He is a philosopher, he has not prospered in the world,

“ For he hadde gotten him yit no benefice  
Ne was so worldly as to have office.”

Then the Sergeant-at-Law, who seems always busier than he is ; the Franklin, or farmer, with his red face and beard white as a daisy ; he keeps open house, the table standing always covered in his hospitable hall.†

Various occupations are represented by the Haber-

\* Wyclif writes of the friars: “ They become peddlers, bearing knives, purses, pins, and girdles, and spices, and silk, and precious pellure, and fouris for women, and thereto small dogs.” (Quoted in Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life*, p. 304.)

† The Franklin held his land directly from the King and free of feudal service. In the fourteenth century the dining tables were usually boards placed on trestles, and were taken away after each meal. The Franklin's was “dormant” *i. e.*, permanent. See Wright's *History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England*, p. 139.

dasher, the Dyer, the Tapicer, or dealer in carpets and rugs, the Cook, who can “roste and sethe, and boille and fry” and make “blankmanger” with the best. The weather-beaten Shipman, whose beard has been shaken by many a tempest, seems not quite at ease on horseback. The Doctor of Physic is a learned and successful practitioner, who knows the literature of his profession, and studies the Bible but little. He keeps all the gold he made in the pestilence.

“For gold in physic is a cordial  
Therfor he lovede gold in special.”

Among all there is the buxom, dashing Wife of Bath, gayly dressed, with scarlet stockings, new shoes, and a hat as broad as a shield, and, in sharp contrast, the Parish Priest, the “*poure persoun* of a town,” reminding us that, in spite of luxurious monks and cheating friars, the Church was not wholly corrupt.

“Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,  
And in adversitee ful pacient.

“He waiteth after no pompe and reverence,  
Ne maked him a spiced conscience,  
But Cristes lore, and his Apostles twelve,  
He taughte, but first he folwed it him-selve.”

But we must hurry to the end of this representative company : the party is made up by the Plowman, the Reeve, or steward, the Miller, who carries a bagpipe, the Summoner, an officer of the Law Courts, the Pardoner, or seller of indulgences, his wallet full of pardons, the Manciple, or caterer for a college, and

last, the Poet himself, noting with twinkling eyes every trick of costume, and looking through all to the soul beneath.

In this truly wonderful group the moving and varied life of Chaucer's England survives in all its bloom and freshness, in the vital power of its intense humanity. The man who could so fix for all time the "form and pressure" of his age must have looked at the world with wide open and clear-seeing eyes. Student of books as he was, and teller of old tales, we see here and elsewhere the shrewd observer and interpreter of life and character, the man with the poet's gift of fresh and independent vision. As we have said, the several stories in the *Canterbury Tales* are dramatic studies, as well as masterpieces of narrative, as each narrator unconsciously reveals something of his own character in the tale he tells. Thus the "Knight's Tale" is steeped in the golden atmosphere of chivalry. Theseus, journeying homeward with his bride, Hippolyta, leaves her as a true knight should to champion the cause of woman in distress. The whole story revolves about the supreme power of love, a doctrine dear to the heart of mediæval chivalry.

"Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,  
That who shal yeve a loveure any lawe ?  
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,  
Than may be yeve to eny erthly man." \*

At the call of this great and mighty god of love, the life-long friendship and affection of Palamon and Arcite are changed in an instant to rivalry and hatred,

\* "Knight's Tale," l. 305, etc.



the solemn oaths which bind them to each other unhesitatingly disregarded. In the tournament the devotee of Venus is made to triumph over the devotee of Mars. The story is rich and glorious in chivalric blazonry ; the gorgeous description of the tournament sparkles and glitters with the luster of that knightly and romantic world. Yet by the very source of this story we are reminded that Chaucer touched the new world of the Renaissance, as well as the vanishing world of the Middle Ages, and the luxurious beauty of the description of the temple of Venus seems to breathe the spirit of beautiful and pagan Italy, which was to find its English reflex in the delicious verse of the *Faërie Queene*. The Knight takes us into his world of the gentles ; so the drunken Miller, a consummate example of obtuse vulgarity, brutally strong and big of brawn and bones, incidentally acquaints us with life as he knows it, while the dainty Prioress, speaking from her sheltered nook of pious meditation, tells her tender story of a miracle, and, as we listen, we seem to hear the clear, young voice of the martyred child ring out fresh and strong. Among the most beautiful of the tales are those told by the Clerk and the Man of Law, two stories that in some respects may be placed together. Both reveal Chaucer's deep reserve of gentleness and compassion ; both reveal his reverential love of goodness ; both bring before us, as the central figure, a patient and holy woman, unjustly treated and bearing all wrongs and griefs with meek submission. In the " Clerk's Tale " the unselfishness and wifely submission of Griselda is placed in sharp contrast with

the selfishness of her husband. The one gives herself up first to her father and then to her husband, making her bed "ful harde and no thing softe"; the other gives himself over wholly to present self-indulgence, even hesitating to take a wife because he rejoices in his liberty that

"Seelde tyme is found in marriage."

When two such natures are brought together, the more unselfishness yields—the more selfishness takes. The ideal of womanhood revealed in Griselda is eminently mediæval, and Chaucer admits that he does not expect women of his time to follow her humility, adding that he tells us the story to show that

"Every wight in his degree  
Sholde be constant in adversitie,  
As was Griselde."

Fortitude may likewise be taken as the patron virtue of the lawyer's tale, as indeed the name of the heroine, Constance, seems to imply. But the story also shows the divine care of innocence in adversity. Over and over again is Constance placed in peril, only to be rescued by the Divine hand. She stands on the seashore, betrayed and about to be set adrift with her newborn child. Even in the face of this deadly peril her faith remains unshaken:

"He that me kepte fro the false blame  
While I was on the lond amonges yow,  
He kan me kepe from harm, and eek fro shame,  
In salte see, al thogh I see noght how  
As strong as evere he was he is yet now.

“ Her litel child lay wepyng in her arm,  
 And knelynge, pitously to hym she seyde,  
 ‘ Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm !’  
 With that hir kerchief of hir heed she breyde,  
 And over hise litel eyen she it leyde,  
 And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,  
 And in-to hevene hire eyen up she caste.” \*

Words cannot be more simple or more tender, nor pathos more profound. We see all as in a picture : The sobbing country people crowding about the fair woman kneeling in their midst ; the sacred beauty of motherhood, of suffering, of heroic faith ; the boat ready at the water’s edge, and, in melancholy perspective, the receding background of the waiting sea. In such passages we feel the truth of Mrs. Browning’s words :

“ Chaucer, with his infantine  
 Familiar grasp of things divine.” †

The “ Man of Lawe’s Tale ” may be set beside Milton’s *Comus* as the story of that virtue which can be “ assailed, but never hurt.” “ Great are the perils of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all ; ” this may be said to be the text of the story of Constance. Yet, even the true joys of the righteous are not temporal, but eternal, and Chaucer continually pauses to remind us of the shortness of earthly happiness.

“ Upon thy glade day have in thy mynde  
 The unwar wo or harm that cometh behynde.” ‡

\* “ Man of Lawe’s Tale.”

† Mrs. Browning’s *Vision of Poets*.

‡ “ Man of Lawe’s Tale.”

Constance is at last reunited to her husband, but he only lives a year after the union.

“Joye of this world for tyme wol nat abyde,  
Fro day to night it changeth as the tyde.”\*

In Chaucer's work we see the expression of a rounded life, an equable and well-developed character that knew and loved men, books, and nature. Like Shakespeare, Chaucer seems to have been able to keep in just balance the ideal and the practical, able to combine the student and the dreamer with the successful ability of a man of affairs. There shines through Chaucer's poems that element of the highest achievement—personal greatness of character. He is truthful, putting down honestly and naturally what he sees; he can enjoy life almost with the frank delight of a child, capable of laughter without malice; and boisterous or coarse as he may sometimes seem, he is at heart surpassingly gentle and compassionate. If such figures as the Wife of Bath flaunt themselves through his pages with noisy laughter and flaring garments, in them are also to be found the very flower of a pure and noble womanhood. Few poets are so loving to little children, few so far from bitter or morbid complainings, ready to face what life sends with a cheerful and manly courage.

“That thee is sent receyve in buxomnesse,  
The wrastling of this world asketh a fal;  
Here is no hoom, here is but wilderness.

\* “Man of Lawe's Tale.”

Forth, pilgrim, forth ! forth best, out of thy stal !  
 Look upon hye, and thonke God of al ;  
 Weyve thy lust, and let thy gost thee lede,  
 And trouthe shal thee delyver, hit is no drede." \*

Finally, in his grasp of human life and in his handling of a story, Chaucer shows a dramatic power which, had he lived in a play-writing age, would have placed him among the greatest dramatists of all time.

But with all this breadth, there are certain elements in Chaucer's England that find no utterance in his works. Men and women of many conditions are indeed found there, from the knight to the miller and the plowman, and all are pictured with the same vividness and truth ; but breadth of observation is not of necessity breadth of sympathy. Nowhere does he show us the England of Langland, with its plague, pestilence, and famine, its fierce indignation flaming up into wild outbursts of socialism.† We may suppose Chaucer's ideal plowman to have been after the pattern of the one he describes in the *Canterbury Tales* :

Poet of the  
court.

" A trewe swinker and a good was he  
 Lyvyng in pees and perfight charitee." ‡

Chaucer was the poet of the court, the poet of those who dwelt in fine houses clad in rich stuffs, not of those who hungered in rain and cold in the fields.

\* *Good Counseil.*

† See " The Pilgrim and the Ploughman " in Palgrave's *Visions of England.*

‡ Prologue to *Canterbury Tales.*



He was the outcome and voice of the spirit of chivalry, in its class distinctions and exclusiveness as well as its splendor.

His easy-going nature has no touch in it of the reformer, the martyr, or the fanatic. He is above all lovable and companionable, not withdrawn in the stern isolation of the highest souls, alone and awful on the mountain summit wrapped in clouds. He rather dwells at his ease at the base, in the broad, sunshiny world of green fields and merry jests, and if the heights and the depths in Dante and Shakespeare were beyond him, we should be thankful for all we gain in his genial and manly company.

## STUDY LIST

### CHAUCER AND HIS TIME

1. CHAUCER'S WORKS. The following poems are suggested for beginners in Chaucer, as fairly representative, and as suitable for introductory study :

*a. Prologue to Canterbury Tales.* This is, perhaps, the most familiar of Chaucer's works. It is unique as a contemporary study of English life in the fourteenth century, and has great historic as well as poetic value. It shows Chaucer, as student and observer of humanity, at his best. Saunders' *Canterbury Tales* gives interesting comments on the various pilgrims, together with pictures of each taken from the Ellesmere MS. It is superfluous to speak here of the poetic charm and dramatic force of the "Prologue," but to appreciate it as a work of art should, of course, be the first consideration with the student of literature. It may also be profitably studied in connection with the contemporary social, political, and religious life. Note especially, under this, condition of the Church; position and work of Wyclif; cf. opening of Langland's vision of *Piers Plowman*; the attitude of Langland,

Chaucer, and Wyclif toward religion, etc., etc. [For references on this point see present list, sections 3 and 4.]

*b. The Knight's Tale.* This story is one of those that shows the influence of Italy. It is the longest of the *Canterbury Tales* and the most gorgeous in coloring. It is founded on the *Teseide* of Boccaccio, but departs from it in some particulars. "The *Teseide* contains 9054 lines, the "Knight's Tale" 2050, of which only about 270 are translated from the Italian and another 500 adapted. So that Chaucer left himself free play." (Pollard's *Chaucer*, 116.) It is probably the recast of an earlier poem, containing "al the love of Palamon and Arcite," alluded to in Chaucer's list of his works in the *Legende of Good Women*. The action of the poem is nominally laid in the heroic age of Greece (look up "Theseus" in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, or some Greek history), but in tone and setting it is consistently mediæval and romantic. "Chaucer's whole story ["Knight's Tale"] breathes the atmosphere of a romantic tale; the whole action of all the participating personages belongs to a world which is composed of very different elements—antique, Byzantine, mediæval—and which is, in an educational and historical sense, full of gross anachronisms, but which bears, nevertheless, a uniform poetic impress, viz., the impress of a fantastic period of the Renaissance." (Ten Brink's *English Literature*, vol. ii. p. 68.) As preliminary, study the description of the Knight given in the "Prologue," and the conclusion of the "Prologue," which explains how the Knight came to tell the first story. The tale opens with Theseus' return from his expedition against the Amazons, he having wedded Ypolita (or Antiope), then queen. In what one of Shakespeare's plays does Theseus appear under the same circumstances? Cf. Shakespeare's and Chaucer's treatment. Is there any similar thought or motive running through this play and the "Knight's Tale"? If so, compare or contrast the two works on this basis. More direct use is made of the "Knight's Tale" in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, attributed to Shakespeare and Fletcher, which may also be compared. Note reference to Chaucer in "Prologue" to this play; v. also introduction to play in Rolfe's edi-

tion. Why is the Knight selected by Chaucer to tell this particular story, rather than one of the other pilgrims? What is the most powerful motive of action in Palamon and Arcite? With what opposing obligations, or inclinations, does this motive conflict? How is its supremacy shown? Why is it more consistent with the plot that Palamon, rather than Arcite, should marry Emily? Collect all the passages in which Chaucer dwells on the irresistible power of the motive of action above referred to, and state from them the leading idea in the poem. Is this leading idea characteristic of the Middle Ages or of the Renaissance? What gives the poem its unity? In what way does the ultimate success of Palamon illustrate this central idea and harmonize with the unity of the poem? Note characteristic beauty of description of Emily walking in the garden, gorgeousness of description of the three temples. "The description of the temple of Mars is particularly interesting, as proving that Chaucer possessed a power of treating the grand and terrible of which no modern poet but Dante had yet given an example." (Marsh, *Origin and History of the English Language*, p. 423.) Note, also, description of tournament. Can you recall any passages in later English poetry comparable to description of paintings in Temple of Venus? Note lavish Renaissance character of description of statue of Venus, and cf. passages showing the same spirit in Spenser's *Faërie Queene*. For "Knight's Tale" v. Morris' Chaucer's "Prologue and Knight's Tale," Saunders' *Canterbury Tales*, Ten Brink's *English Literature*, vol. ii.

c. *The Clerk's Tale*. This story also illustrates Italian influence on Chaucer. It is taken from Petrarch's *De Obedientia et Fide Uxoriam Mythologica*, and is in places an almost word for word translation. The story is an old one, and was once a great favorite (Petrarch said that no one had been able to read it in the *Decamerone* without tears), but the character of Griselda is so entirely a product of past social conditions that it is quite out of keeping with our modern ideas. Petrarch took his version of the story from Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, translating it from Italian into Latin. Chaucer tells us in the prologue to the *Tale*, that he learned it of Petrarch, and it

is, therefore, probably a direct outcome of Chaucer's first journey to Italy. "We may conjecture," says Professor Skeat, "that Chaucer and Petrarch met at Padua early in 1373; that Petrarch told Chaucer the story by word of mouth, either in Italian or French; and that Chaucer shortly after obtained a copy of Petrarch's Latin version, which he kept constantly before him whilst making his own translation." (Introduction to Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale," etc., Clarendon Press).

Read, first, description of Clerk in general "Prologue," and "Prologue" to "Clerk's Tale." [Note meaning of Clerk; *v.* derivation in Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*. "A learned man; . . . a scholar; . . . originally a man who could read, an attainment at one time confined chiefly to ecclesiastics [Archaic]," (*Century Dictionary*.) In prologue to "Clerk's Tale," Petrarch is spoken of as a "worthy clerk."]

In this tale we have fine instances of character contrast in Walter and Griselda. Study these two characters separately, and note the skill with which they are placed in opposition. The character of Griselda is one that we find it difficult to do justice to. We must remember, however, that the story belongs to the Middle Ages, and that the feudal state of society and the position of women at that time must be taken into account. Griselda is bound to obey, first, because she is the daughter of Walter's vassal; second, because she is Walter's wife, and in those days the wife's promise to "honor and obey" was strictly construed; third, because she has taken a solemn additional oath to do her husband's will in every case without grudging (*v.* l. 345, etc). Moreover, resistance in Griselda's case would probably mean rebellion against lawfully constituted authority, *without any reasonable chance of success*. The following anecdote, taken by Thomas Wright from an old French writer, whose book is a product of mediæval chivalry, helps to dispel rose-colored ideas, and illuminates the real position of women at that time: "The Chevalier de la Tour Landy tells his daughter the story of a woman who was in the habit of contradicting her husband in public, and replying to him ungraciously, for



which, after the husband had expostulated in vain, he one day raised his fist and knocked her down, and kicked her in the face while she was down, and broke her nose. 'And so,' says the knightly instructor, 'she was disfigured for life, and thus, through her ill-fortune and bad temper, she had her nose spoiled, which was a great misfortune to her. It would have been better for her to have been silent and submissive, for it is only right that words of authority should belong to her lord, and the wife's honor requires that she should listen in peace and obedience.' The good 'chevalier' makes no remark on the husband's brutality, as though it were by no means an unusual occurrence." (*Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages*, p. 275).

Boccaccio implies that the moral of the story is that virtue can be found in all conditions of life. "What can we say then? but that divine spirits may descend from heaven into the meanest cottages, whilst royal palaces shall produce such as seem rather adapted to have the care of hogs than the government of men." (*Decamerone*, Novel X.). What does Chaucer tell us is his moral? What further treatment has the story of Griselda received in English literature? Name a ballad and a play on this subject.

d. *The Man of Lawe's Tale*.

e. *The Nonne Prestes Tale*.

f. *Good Counsel*.—*Complaint to my Purse*. V. also extracts from longer poems in Ward's *English Poets*.

2. EDITIONS OF CHAUCER. For those poems contained in it, the edition in Clarendon Press Series, edited by Morris and Skeat, is recommended. For complete edition Bell's or Gilman's may be used. Wright has edited *Canterbury Tales*, with notes; more recent edition of same by A. W. Pollard.

The most satisfactory edition for the scholar will doubtless be that edited by Rev. Walter W. Skeat (Clarendon Press, Macmillan) and now in course of publication. This edition contains life of Chaucer, variorum readings of text "from numerous manuscripts," notes, etc. Two volumes have been issued.

There are numerous modernizations of Chaucer, also prose



paraphrases, some of the latter designed for young readers. *Chaucer's Pilgrimage, Epitomised by William Calder* (Blackwood) gives "Prologue" with prose paraphrase and prose version of principal tales. Mrs. Haweis' *Chaucer for Schools*, extracts from text and paraphrase, is admirably adapted for young readers.

3. CHAUCER. Biography, criticism, etc. Convenient manual for general use is A. W. Pollard's *Chaucer*, in English Literature Primer Series: Macmillan. Lounsbury's *Chaucer*, three volumes, is a scholarly work of high order. See also, Lowell's essay on "Chaucer," in *My Study Windows* (indispensable); Ward's *Life of* (in English Men of Letters Series); Sandras' *Étude sur Chaucer considéré comme Imitateur des Trouvères*; Saunders' *Canterbury Tales*; Alexander Smith's "Chaucer," in *Dreamthorpe*, not strictly reliable, but gives graphic pictures of chivalry. The poem on "The Pilgrim and the Ploughman," in Palgrave's *Visions of England*, p. 82, is admirable from critical as well as poetical point of view, and should be read with class. Ten Brink's *English Literature*, vol. ii., translated by W. Clark Robinson, includes this period, v. especially for Chaucer.

4. HISTORY, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS, ETC. Pauli's *Pictures of Old England* (valuable for social conditions, etc., in Chaucer's time); Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century*; Wright's *History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages*; Cutt's *Scenes and Characters in the Middle Ages*; Brown's *Chaucer's England*; S. Lanier's *Boys' Froissart*, and Bulfinch's *Age of Chivalry* may be used with class.

5. LANGLAND. Warton's *History of English Poetry*, sec. 8; Morley's *English Writers*, vol. iv.

6. LANGUAGE. Marsh's *Lectures on the English Language*; Lounsbury's *English Language*; Earle's *Philology of the English Tongue*; Carpenter's *English in the Fourteenth Century*; Trench's *English Past and Present*.

## PART II

### PERIOD OF ITALIAN INFLUENCE

1400-1660

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#### CHAPTER I

##### THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING

##### THE COMING OF THE NEW LEARNING TO ENGLAND

THE century following the death of Chaucer is generally regarded as "the most barren" in the history of the literature. Indeed, after the year 1400, we find little evidence of a fresh and vigorous life in English literature until the year 1579, when Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* was given to the world. Yet the fifteenth century is, nevertheless, of far-reaching importance in the history of England's mental growth. It was a time of national education. If England did not produce great literature, she received from many sources new thoughts and impulses, which replenished and broadened her life, and which later found expression in her literary work. In the fifteenth century England passed definitely out of the bounds of the Middle Ages and came to share as a nation in the inspiration of the Renaissance, which, in the century before, only such rare individual

minds as Chaucer and Wyclif had known by anticipation. The feudal society of the Middle Ages was finally shattered in England by the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485), in which great numbers of the old nobility perished. The outworn scholastic learning, the relic of the mediaeval monastic schools, was cast aside, and the reorganization of the entire educational system of England, according to the advanced ideas of Italy, was begun. In the early years of the fifteenth century the old learning had ceased to satisfy, and the new had not yet come. At Oxford the spirit of free inquiry stimulated by Wyclif had been sternly suppressed. Versifiers worked painstakingly after the pattern set by Chaucer; but literature, like learning, waited the breath of a new impulse. So England lay

**The new  
learning.**

“Between two worlds,  
One dead, the other powerless to be born.”\*

Then the new life manifested itself amid the breaking up of the old order. At Oxford, between 1420 and 1485, new colleges were established, and a library was founded by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. About the middle of the century Henry VI. founded King's, and Margaret of Anjou Queen's College, Cambridge, and in the same reign the great school of Eton was established. Three universities arose in Scotland between 1410 and 1494. But even more important than the increased opportunities for education was the introduction of new methods and subjects of study. The

**Foundation  
of colleges.**

\* Matthew Arnold's *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*.

knowledge of Greek life and literature, almost wholly lost during the Middle Ages, had stirred Italy with the power of a fresh revelation. Chrysoloras, an ambassador from Constantinople, had begun to teach Greek in Florence in 1395, and upon the fall of Constantinople (1453) numbers of Greek scholars took refuge in Italy, bringing precious manuscripts and the treasures of an old thought which Europe hailed as "new." Italy became the university of Europe, and toward the end of the fifteenth century English scholars learned at Padua, at Bologna, or at the Florence of Lorenzo de' Medici, what they taught at Oxford or at Cambridge. Cornelius Vitelli, an Italian exile, taught Greek at Oxford before 1475; there, too, William Grocyn lectured on Greek in 1491, after he had studied under Vitelli, and in Florence and Venice. Among Grocyn's hearers was the young Sir Thomas More, who was later to embody the new spirit in his history of Richard III., and in the *Utopia*. We have thus an illustration of the way in which the new learning sprang from Italian to Englishman, and from the English scholar to the English writer, thus passing out of the college into the wider sphere of literature. Among this band of reformers was Thomas Linacre, a learned physician; John Colet, who studied the New Testament in the original, and who started a system of popular education by founding in 1512 the grammar school of St. Paul; Erasmus, the famous Dutch scholar, who taught Greek at Cambridge, and wrote at More's house his *Praise of Folly*.

Side by side with the new learning came the new

means men had found for its diffusion. William Caxton, who had learned the strange art of printing at Bruges, returned to England in 1476, and set up his press at Westminster "at the sign of the Red Pale." Here he published the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (1477), the first work printed in England. Caxton was no mere tradesman; he was prompted by a deep and unselfish love for literature. His press gave England the best he knew—the poems of Chaucer, the *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory, a noble book on which Tennyson has based his *Idylls of the King*. Our first printer was himself an industrious translator; the favorite of royal and noble patrons of learning. "Many noble and divers gentle men" discussed literary matters with him in his humble workshop; among the rest, John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, the first English scholar of his time, who has been called "the firstfruits of the Italian Renaissance in England."

While the touch of Greek beauty and philosophy, restored and immortal after their burial of a thousand years, was thus reanimating Europe, the horizon of the world was suddenly enlarged by a series of great discoveries. In 1486 Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope; in 1492 Columbus penetrated the sea of darkness and gave to civilization a New World: in 1498 Vasco di Gama rounded Africa and made a new path to India. England shared in this fever of exploration, and in 1497 the Cabots, sent by Henry VII. "to subdue land unknown to all Christians," saw the mainland of



America. We can hardly overestimate the impetus given to the mental life of Europe by such a sudden rush of new ideas. The opportunities for life and action were multiplying : man's familiar earth was expanding on every side. The air was charged with wonder and romance ; the imagination of explorers was alive with the dreams of a poet, and cities shining with gold, or fountains of perpetual youth, were sought for in the excitement of sensation which made the impossible seem a thing of every day.

In the midst of all the new activity, Copernicus (1500) put forth his theory that, instead of being the center of the universe, round which the whole heavens revolved, the solid earth **Copernicus.** was but a satellite in motion round the central sun. While this conception, so startling to men's most fundamental notions, was slow to gain general acceptance, it was another element of wonder and of change.

The Church was quickened by the currents of this new life. Men chafed at its corrupt wealth and narrow mediæval views. The Bible was translated and made the book of the **The Reforma-  
tion.** people. Luther, the type of the unfettered, individual conscience, faced Pope and Cardinal with his " Here I stand, Martin Luther ; I cannot do otherwise : God help me." This mighty upheaval shook England as well as Germany. The year of 1526 saw the introduction of Tyndale's translation of the Bible, and eight years later the policy of Henry VIII. withdrew the Church in England from the headship of the Pope.

Thus England came to share in the diverse activities of the Renaissance, intellectual, maritime, and religious ; in the revival of learning, the **Summary.** discovery of the world, and the Reformation. In the fifteenth century she had absorbed and stored up many vital influences ; early in the sixteenth century these slowly accumulated forces, these new emotions and ideas, began to find an outlet in the work of a new class of writers, and we reach the threshold of the Elizabethan era, the time when the Renaissance found utterance in English literature.

#### EXPRESSION OF THE NEW LEARNING IN LITERATURE

The first conspicuous example of the influence of Italy on English verse is found in the poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt and of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. These noblemen belonged to the new class of "Courtly Makers,"\* poets of the court circle, in whose brilliant and crowded lives the making of verses was but the graceful and incidental accomplishment of the finished cavalier. Poetry was a court fashion, and Henry VIII., a patron of the new learning, was himself a writer of songs. Both Wyatt and Surrey were translators as well as imitators of the Italian poetry, and their effect on literature was even greater than the intrinsic value of their work. They introduced the sonnet, which Petrarch had recently brought to great

\* *Maker* is a poet, one who creates. Poet from Greek *ποιητής*, a maker. Troubadour or *trouvère*, from the French *trouver*, to find ; one who invents or makes. See note on *Scôp*, p. 23, *supra*.

perfection—almost the only highly artificial poetic form ever successfully transplanted to England. Surrey did even more for the future of English poetry. In his partial translation of Vergil's *Æneid*, he adopted, from the Italian, the unrhymed ten-syllable measure (iambic pentameter), which we call blank verse. This meter the dramatists of Elizabeth's time thus found ready to their hand. Used in the first English tragedy, the *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, of Sackville and Norton (1565), improved by Marlowe and by Shakespeare, it was made the epic verse of English poetry in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. But Wyatt and Surrey did more than use Italian meters and poetic forms; they had absorbed, also, the sentiment and thought of Italy, and, in their songs and sonnets, deal with "the complexities of love," and kindred themes, according to the best Italian models. While we may weary of their conventional gamut of sighs and groans, we must think of these Courtly Makers as doing a great work by bringing to English poetry that new Italy which was the fairy godmother of Elizabethan literature. The publication, in 1557, of the work of these two poets, in a collection known as *Tottel's Miscellany of Uncertain Authors*, did much to popularize the new style of writing; and with that year the Elizabethan period may conveniently be said to begin.

The extent and importance of Italy's influence in England, whether on education or literature, can be appreciated only by careful study. Italian influence.

"Every breeze was dusty with the golden pollen

of Greece, Rome, and of Italy.”\* Sir Thomas More wrote a life of Pico di Mirandola, a great leader in the new Italian culture. In Sackville’s *Mirror for Magistrates* (1563) we recognize the influence of Dante, and the *Faërie Queene* of Edmund Spenser (1590) is aglow with the warmer and more prodigal beauty of the south, and filled with reminiscences of the romantic poems of Tasso and Ariosto. The same force was contributing to the growth of a great English drama, and Shakespeare himself was but one among many playwrights who took their plots from the Italian novels, and brought home to London audiences the glories of Venice or Verona.

Through the example and stimulus of Italy, the literatures of Greece and Rome were made a living element in English culture. Not only did scholars and the fine ladies of the court pore over their Plato in Greek, translators were busily at work making the great classics the common quarry for all who could read the English tongue. During the latter half of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries, Vergil’s *Æneid*, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, numbers of Seneca’s plays, and Homer, in the famous translation of Chapman, were thus made English literature. The Elizabethan writers delighted in a somewhat ostentatious display of this newly acquired learning, and their works are often filled with classic allusions which we should now consider commonplace. But as a quickening power their effect was incalculable. Shakespeare’s use of Sir Thomas North’s translation

The work of  
the trans-  
lators.

\* Lowell’s essay on “Spenser,” in *Among My Books*.



of Plutarch's *Lives* admirably illustrates the way in which the translator supplied material for the author. Out of North's version Shakespeare built his *Julius Cæsar*, *Coriolanus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and, to some extent, *Timon of Athens*. The literature of Italy was likewise thrown open to the English reader. Harrington translated Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1591); Fairfax translated Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (1600), while hundreds of Italian stories were for sale in the London bookstalls clustered about old St. Paul's.

#### ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

The thought and imagination of England, thus expanding under the stimulus of the Renaissance, found many conditions in the reign of Elizabeth which favored their expression in literature.

In the two preceding reigns much of the national force had been spent in religious controversies. Edward VI. (1547-1553) had forced Protestantism upon a nation not, as a whole, fully prepared to accept it; Mary (1553-1558) with a religious zeal as pathetic as, in our eyes, it was cruel and mistaken, had striven to persecute the people back into Roman Catholicism. In Elizabeth's reign we pass out of the bitterness and confusion of this warfare of religions into a period of comparative quiet. The religious and political difficulties which beset Elizabeth, on her accession in 1558, slowly sank out of sight under her firm and moderate rule. Patience and toleration did much to soften the violence of the religious parties;

Freedom from  
religious per-  
secution.



the fierce fires of martyrdom, which had lit up the terrible reign of Mary, were cold, and the nation, relieved from pressing anxieties, was comparatively free to turn to other issues. The very year in which Shakespeare is supposed to have come up to London to seek his fortune (1587) saw the final removal of a threatened danger by the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, while the year following England struck down the haughty menace of the Spaniard by her defeat of the Armada.

But the reign was more than a period of relief from past struggles or persecution ; it was marked

**Prosperity of  
the people.**

by a rapid advance in national prosperity and by a widespread increase in the comforts and luxuries of life. Among

the people there were many causes of contentment. Improved methods of farming doubled the yield per acre ; the domestic manufacture of wool greatly increased, and homespun came into favor. In many little ways, by the introduction of chimneys, of feather beds, pillows, and the more general use of glass, the conveniences of living were greatly increased. The sea, as well as the land, yielded a large revenue. Not only did the English fishing boats crowd the Channel, but hardy sailors brought back cod from the Newfoundland banks, or tracked the whale in the vast solitudes of the polar seas.

England was laying the foundations of her future commercial and maritime supremacy. Her trade

**Growth of  
commerce.**

increased with Flanders and with the ports of the Mediterranean, and her merchant ships pushed to Scandinavia, Archangel,

and Guinea. In 1566 Sir Thomas Gresham built the Royal Exchange in London, a hall in which the merchants met as the Venetians in their Rialto. Toward the end of the sixteenth century the famous East India Company was established.

With the ease and wealth that sprang from this increasing prosperity came that delight in beauty, that half-pagan pleasure in the splendid adornments of life, which characterize The splendor  
of life. the Italian Renaissance. Life, no longer shut within the heavy masonry of the feudal castle, ran glittering in the open sunshine. Stately villas were built, with long gable roofs, grotesque carvings, and shining oriels, and surrounded with the pleached walks and the terraces, the statuary and the fountains of an Italian garden.

The passion for color showed itself among the wealthier classes in a lavish magnificence and eccentricity of costume. The young dandy went "perfumed like a milliner,"\* and Dress. often affected the fashions of Italy as the Anglo-maniac of our own day apes those of England. In its luxury of delight in life and color, the nation bedecked itself

"With silken coats, and caps, and golden rings,  
With ruffs, and cuffs, and farthingales, and things;  
With scarfs and fans, and double change of bravery,  
With amber bracelets, beads, and all this knavery." †

Moralists and Puritans bitterly denounced the ex-

\* *King Henry IV.*, act i. scene 3.

† *Taming of the Shrew*, act iv. scene 3.

travagance and absurdities of the rapidly changing fashions. "Except it were a dog in a doublet," writes an author of the time, "you shall not see any so disguised as are my countrymen of England."\* But ridicule and reproof were alike powerless to check the nation's holiday mood. Men put off their more sober garments to rustle in silks and satins, to sparkle with jewels; they were gorgeous in laces and velvets, they glittered with chains and brooches of gold, they gladly suffered themselves to be tormented by huge ruffs, stiff with the newly discovered vanity of starch!

Shakespeare, whom we cannot imagine over precise, is fond of showing such fashionable vanities in an unfavorable light, and from more than one passage we may suppose him to have felt an intense, country-bred dislike for painted faces and false hair. On the other hand, when we read his famous description of Cleopatra in her barge, we appreciate how all this glow of color appealed to and satisfied the imagination of the time.† The same spirit showed itself in the costly banquets, in the showy pageants or street processions, with their elaborate scenery and allegorical characters, in the revels like those with which Queen Elizabeth was received at Kenilworth (1575), in the spectacular entertainment of the mask, a performance in which poet, musician, and—as we should say—the stage manager, worked together to delight mind, eye, and ear. Milton has this splendor in mind when he writes :

\* Harrison's *Elizabethan England*, Camelot Series, p. 108.

† *Antony and Cleopatra*, act ii. scene 2.

“There let Hymen oft appear  
 In saffron robe, with taper clear,  
 And pomp, and feast, and revelry,  
 With mask and antique pageantry,  
 Such sights as youthful poets dream  
 On summer eves by haunted stream.”\*

But the Elizabethan passion for dress and ornament is but a surface indication of the immense delight in life which characterizes the time. If we would appreciate the vital spirit of this crowded and bewildering age, we must feel the rush of its superb and irrepressible energy, pouring itself out through countless channels. England was like a youth first come to the full knowledge of his strength, rejoicing as a giant to run his course, and determined to do, to see, to know, to enjoy to the full. The fever of adventure burned in her veins; Drake sailed round the world (1577-1580); the tiny ships of Hawkins, Frobisher, Gilbert, and the rest, parted the distant waters of unplowed seas. The buccaneers plundered and fought with the zest and unwearied vigor of the viking. When Sir Walter Raleigh was taken prisoner in 1603, he is said to have been decked with four thousand pounds' worth of jewels; yet, courtier and fine gentleman as he was, he could face peril, hunger, and privation, in the untracked solitudes of the New World. With an insatiable and many-sided capacity for life typical of his time, Raleigh wrote poetry, boarded Spanish galleons, explored the wilderness, and produced in his old age a huge *History of the World*. In their

Elizabethan  
 delight  
 in life.

\* *L'Allegro*.

full confidence of power men carried on vast literary undertakings, like Sidney's *Arcadia*, Drayton's *Polyolbion*, or Spenser's *Faërie Queene*, the magnitude of which would have daunted a less vigorous generation. Nothing wearied, nothing fatigued them ; like Raleigh, they could "toil terribly." The young Francis Bacon—lawyer, philosopher, and courtier—wrote to Cecil with an inimitable audacity : "I have taken all knowledge to be my province."

The center of all this full and active life was London. It was there that not only all the great dramatists, poets, and courtiers met, but **Shakespeare's London.** there too came the famous travelers after their long and perilous voyages to take their ease in their inns. At the old Mermaid tavern in Bread Street gathered the great men of the age. Here Shakespeare, Jonson, Raleigh, and the rest drank their malmsey and canary like ordinary mortals, and smoked with wonder the newly introduced tobacco, discussing, doubtless, the latest play or poem, or listening eagerly to travelers' tales of the splendors of Italy or the marvels of the New World.

We must remember that Shakespeare's, like Chaucer's, London was a walled town, and that its great gates were still used. Just outside of the wall to the north lay open fields, dotted occasionally with houses and windmills. There was Spitalfield, Smithfield or Smoothfield, then a grassy plain where tournaments were held and where, under Mary, Protestants had been burned. Much of the ground about the city thus remained uninhabited. The population of London at this time is placed at about a hundred and









Bushops gate streete. b. Papie. c. Alhallowes in the wall. d. S. Taphyns. e. Syluer borne Conduit. 1. Chauncery lane. m. Temple barr. n. Holbourn. o. Grayes Inn lane. Lucklers burye. w. Brodestreete. x. The stockes. y. The Exchange. z. Cornehill. Gratiouse streete. 7. Heneage house. 8. Fanchurche. 9. Marke lane. 10. Minchyn lane. es streete. 17. London stone. 18. Olde Baylye. 19. Clerkenwell. 20. Winchester house.

LONDON IN 1593.

British Museum by Stephen Thompson, and re-engraved by W. H. Hooper.



fifty thousand people, so that while the city was already pushing out into the country in some directions, the great bulk of the people could still be accommodated within the walls.

The streets were narrow and ill-paved, and unhealthy from refuse and bad drainage, but they were gay with the bright and varied costumes of the people, and the splendid jewels of the nobles flashed in an atmosphere then undimmed by the smoke of countless furnaces. The extravagant and gorgeous dress of the nobility presented a striking contrast to the plainer clothes or liveries of the lower classes. For in those days dress defined the rank, and one knew the apprentice by his round woolen cap and plain doublet, the lawyer by his loose black gown and tight-fitting coif, the yeoman by his russet homespun, and could even tell a bishop's servant from a nobleman's by his yellow livery. The streets rang with the cries of all kinds of peddlers, many of whose quaint verses have fortunately been preserved. Along the Strand, which stretched beyond the city wall parallel with the Thames, stood some of the finest houses of the great nobles—York House, where Bacon was born, Durham Place, where Raleigh lived, Somerset House, Baynard's Castle, and the Temple, with its gardens.

The majority of houses were built chiefly of wood, although brick and stone were beginning to be used. They were turreted, and had many gables and overhanging upper stories. The fronts of the houses were often plastered and ornamented with coats of arms or curious designs of carved woodwork. All the



handsome places on the Strand, whose beautiful gardens sloped to the Thames, had terraces and steps leading down to the water, and every great establishment had its own barge and watermen. At night it must have reminded one of Venice, when the ladies, masked and cloaked, came down by torchlight to meet their gallants waiting for them in silken-covered tiltboats. Indeed, by either night or day the Thames was a beautiful sight, for the river then ran clear and sparkling, while on it floated snowy swans, and brightly trimmed boats, filled with a gay company, skimmed over its surface. It will help us to picture the immense number of these small boats when we realize that the watermen took the place of the cabmen of the present day. Instead of driving one took a boat, and at a certain ferry the passer by is said to have been hailed by the cry :

“ Twopence to London Bridge, threepence to the Strand,  
Fourpence, sir, to Whitehall Stairs, or else you'll go by  
land.”

The same old London Bridge, which we noted in Chaucer's time, was still standing, but many houses and shops had been added to those it then contained. These were built with their rear overhanging the water, which rushed through the arches beneath them with great rapidity. The famous painter, Hans Holbein, who came to England in Henry VIII.'s time, occupied one of these houses, and must have seen many striking pictures pass his door. The tower which stood before the drawbridge had been elaborately rebuilt by Elizabeth and called Nonesuch

House, and on its battlements was now displayed a ghastly row of the heads of traitors and criminals.

But to make our mental picture complete, we must repeople these scenes with the rush of life ; the nave of St. Paul's is filled with gossiping throngs, the Thames with its pleasure-seekers, the theaters packed with noisy spectators. If we can but make all this alive again in our imagination, we shall realize that to live in Shakespeare's London was to touch at every point all the crowded activities of the time.

And all this young life, with its varied spheres of action, was still further quickened by a deep national pride in the growing greatness of England, and by a feeling of chivalric loyalty to the Queen. Religious differences gave way before a common bond of patriotism. The men that faced "the Great Armada" were united by a common hatred of Spain, a common devotion to England and to her Queen. The destruction of this huge armament made every English heart beat with a new pride of country that became a moving power in the literature of the time. We feel the exultant thrill of this triumph in those stirring words in Shakespeare's *King John*:

" This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,  
But when it first did help to wound itself.  
Now these her princes are come home again,  
Come the three corners of the world in arms,  
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,  
If England to itself do rest but true."\*

\* *King John*, act v. scene 7.

And the center of this new nationality was the Queen. Capricious, vain, and fickle as Elizabeth was, she awakened a devoted loyalty denied to the gloomy and relentless Mary, or to the timorous and ungainly James. She had a quick and practical sympathy with the new intellectual and literary activities of her time. The first regular tragedy was produced before her, and her interest helped the development of the struggling drama.

Loyalty to  
the Queen.

“The versatility and many-sidedness of her mind enabled her to understand every phase of the intellectual movement about her, and to fix by a sort of instinct on its highest representative.” \*

As we review the achievements of Elizabethan England we can see that the same magnificent energy which makes England prosperous at home and triumphant upon the seas is the motive power back of the greatest creative period of her literature. Looking at this great time as a whole, we must see England as “a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks—as an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam.”† Elizabethan literature is but one outlet for this imperious energy ; it is the new feeling for life that creates the drama as well as discovers kingdoms far away. This is indeed the Renaissance—the Re-birth.

Summary.

\* Green's *History of the English People*, vol. ii. p. 319.

† Milton's *Areopagitica*.

## EDMUND SPENSER

Edmund Spenser was born in London about 1552. There is some dispute as to his parentage, but he appears to have belonged to a respectable Lancashire family. After attending the Merchant Taylor school in London, he went to Pembroke College, Cambridge, as a sizar, or free scholar, in 1569. His first published poems, translations from Du Bellay and Petrarch, appeared in the same year in a poetical miscellany called the *Theater for Worldlings*. The work is smooth and creditable, but the especial value of the poem is its indication of Spenser's early interest in the French and Italian literature.

While at college Spenser became acquainted with Gabriel Harvey, who figures in the literary history of the time as a learned, if somewhat formal and narrow-minded critic, deeply interested in the development of English poetry. Spenser left Cambridge after taking his master's degree, in 1576, and spent two years in the north, probably with his kinsfolk in Lancashire. Shortly before 1579 he became acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney, the mirror and pattern of the English gentleman of the time, then a young man of about Spenser's age. Tradition has it that Spenser wrote his *Shepherd's Calendar* during a stay at Penshurst, Sidney's country place. The poem received immediate recognition as a work which marked the coming of a new and original poet. It is an eclogue, or pastoral poem, in twelve books, one for each month. Spenser weaves into its dialogue some of his recent country experiences, including his unsuccessful suit of a lady he calls

Rosalind. He asserts his Puritanism, condemns the laziness of the clergy, and pays the customary tribute to the vanity of the Queen. In Elizabeth's time the great avenue to success was through the royal favor, and Spenser tried to push his fortunes at court through his friend Sidney and the Earl of Leicester. But Sidney was out of the Queen's good graces, and had left in disgust to weave the airy tissue of his *Arcadia*.

Leicester had Spenser appointed secretary to Lord Grey, the new deputy to Ireland, and in 1580 the young poet left the brilliant England of Elizabeth, with its gathering intellectual forces, for a barbarous and rebellious colony. In this lawless and miserable country he spent the rest of his life, except for brief visits to England; "banished," as he bitterly writes, "like wight forlorn, into that waste where *he* was quite forgot."

Lord Grey was recalled in 1582, but Spenser remained in Dublin about six years longer as clerk in the Chancery Court. We find an unintentional irony in the fact that the former incumbent, from whom Spenser purchased the post, a certain Ludovic Briskett, wished to "retire to the quietness of study." Spenser was rewarded for his services by a gift of the castle of Kilcolman, part of the forfeited estate of the Desmonds. There Sir Walter Raleigh found him :

" Amongst the coolly shade  
Of the green alders of the Mullae's shore,"\*

\* *Colin Clout Come Home Again*. Read this entire passage, beginning line 56.



and heard from the poet's own lips the first three books of his masterpiece, *The Faërie Queene*. Raleigh, with great and generous admiration, prevailed upon Spenser to accompany him to London, where the first installment of *The Faërie Queene* appeared in the same year (1590). Spenser remained in London about a year, learning the miseries of a suitor for princes' favors, and then returned in bitter indignation to his provincial seclusion.

Spenser's keen sense of disappointment and neglect found utterance in a passage in *Mother Hubbard's Tale* (1591), which brings us near to the inner life of the poet himself.

“ Full little knowest thou, that hast not tride  
What hell it is, in suing long to bide :  
To loose good dayes, that might be better spent ;  
To wast long nights in pensive discontent ;  
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow ;  
To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow ;  
To have thy Princes' grace, yet want her Peeres ;  
To have thy asking, yet waite manie yeeres ;  
To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares ;  
To eate thy heart through comfortlesse dispaire ;  
To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to ronne,  
To spend, to give, to want, to be undonne.  
Unhappie wight, borne to desastrous end,  
That doth his life in so long tendance spend ! ”

It is not often that we are permitted to get so close to Spenser as in these words. They give us a glimpse into the true meaning of his experience. We feel how he hated his exile in Ireland, when we see how deeply his failure to leave it for England had wounded him, and we can estimate more justly

the effect of that dreary banishment on Spenser and his work. Shut out from all the excitement and rush of life that crowded Shakespeare's London, he turned from the repulsive coarseness and violence about him, to delight his soul in the languor and beauty of the Italy of the Renaissance. He lived in the dream-world of Ariosto and Tasso, and carried their gorgeous fancies into his *Faërie Queene*.

After his return to Ireland in 1594, he married Elizabeth Boyer, "an Irish country lass," and paid her a poet's tribute in his *Amoretti*, or love sonnets, and in the splendid *Epithalamion*, or marriage hymn, a poem filled with a rich and noble music. Here also, besides writing several minor poems, he completed six of the twelve books that were to make up the first part of *The Faërie Queene*. About 1595 Spenser again visited London, and in the following year published his *Prothalamion*, or song before marriage. Apart from its poetical value, this poem has a personal interest. Through it we are able to determine Spenser's birthplace, for he speaks of London as

" My most kindly nurse,  
That to me gave this life's first native source."

From it, too, it would appear that he was again an unsuccessful suitor at court. Spenser returned to Ireland in 1598, having been appointed sheriff of Cork. Shortly after, his house was burned and plundered in the rebellion of Tyrone. Spenser barely escaped with his wife and children. He soon afterward went to London as bearer of dispatches.

Here he died a few weeks later (January 16, 1599) in a lodging-house, a ruined and broken-hearted man. Ben Jonson wrote : " He died for lack of bread, in King Street, and refused twenty pieces sent to him by my Lord of Essex, saying that he had no time to spend th m."

Spenser stands alone, the one supremely great undramatic poet of a play-writing time. In his youth he had, indeed, composed nine comedies, now lost, but the quality of his genius Spenser as a poet. was apart from the dramatic temper of his greatest poetical contemporaries. With a wonderful richness and fluency of poetic utterance, with the painter's feeling for color, and the musician's ear for melody, Spenser lacked the sense of humor, the firm grasp of actual life, indispensable to the successful dramatist. From one aspect Spenser's work expresses the spirit and deals with the problems of his time. In *The Faërie Queene* the struggle of the Church of England with the Church of Rome, a vital issue for Elizabeth and her people, is imaged by the opposing figures of the saintly Una and the foul and dissembling Duessa : what Spenser deemed the righteous severity of Lord Grey's Irish administration is symbolized by Artegal, the knightly personification of Justice. But while current events or questions are thus introduced under the thin veil of allegory, while from time to time we catch the more or less distorted image of some great contemporary, Mary Queen of Scots or Sir Philip Sidney, from another aspect *The Faërie Queene* impresses us as remote from the substantial world of fact, enveloped

in an enchanted atmosphere peculiarly its own. In its visionary pages Spenser revives a fading chivalry, clothing it in fantastic but beautiful hues, at a time when the author of *Don Quixote* was about to ridicule its decaying glories with his melancholy scorn. Yet unreal and luxurious as *The Faërie Queene* may seem, Spenser had in it a distinctly practical and moral object. Under the mask of allegory he aimed to show the earthly warfare between good and evil, representing the contending virtues and vices by the different personages of the story. The general object of the poem was to "fashion a perfect gentleman," by showing the beauty of goodness and its final triumph. But this moral purpose, overlaid with lavish color and confused by minor or conflicting allegories, is often lost sight of by the reader; sometimes, we are inclined to think, by the poet himself. We are rather led to enjoy without question the beauty which delights the eye, or the rhythmical undulations of a verse which satisfies the ear. Moral purpose and allegory are alike obscured by the intricacies of a story, which, as we advance, reminds us of a river scattering its divided forces through countless channels, until it ends choked in sand. But the imperishable charm of the poem is independent of its story or of its declared purpose. No poet before Spenser had called out such sweet and stately music from our English speech, and none had so captivated by an appeal to the pure sense of beauty. Spenser was a high-minded Englishman, a student of the ideal philosophy of Plato, with a touch of Puritan severity; but he had, above all, the warm and beauty-loving



temper of the Renaissance. In his solitary Kilcolman, amid the insecurity, pillage, and misery of unhappy Ireland, he felt the full fascination of Italy, an alluring southern magic, which to Ascham seemed like "the enchantments of the Circes." In *The Faërie Queene*, the half-pagan and gorgeous beauty of the Italian Renaissance finds its most perfect expression in English poetry, modified and restrained by Spenser's serenity and spirituality and by his English conscience. With him we are not, as with Chaucer, admitted to the mirth and jolly fellowship of the common highway; rather, like Tennyson's Lady of Shalott in her high tower, we see in a glass only the passing reflection of knight and page. There are moods when this rests and satisfies; then, again, we look down to Camelot at life itself, and the mirror cracks from side to side.

## STUDY LIST

### SPENSER

1. *THE FAËRIE QUEENE*, Bk. I., edited with notes and introductions by G. W. Kitchin, Clarendon Press Series. (Dr. Kitchin has also edited the second book of *The Faërie Queene*, published in a separate volume to correspond with the above). Selections in Ward's *English Poets*, vol. i. "Prothalamion," "Epithalamion."

2. *BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM*. Church's *Life of Spenser*, English Men of Letters Series, Lowell's essay on "Spenser," in *Among My Books*. Green's *History of the English People*, vol. ii. 461-467. "One Aspect of Spenser's Faërie Queene." *Andover Review*, vol. xii. p. 272; v. also "Another Aspect of the Faërie Queene," a reply to this article in same Review, vol. xiv. p. 609. Grosart's edition of *Complete Works of Spenser*, is



difficult to obtain but valuable for advanced work ; it contains life, and critical articles by eminent writers. Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies* contain essays on " Spenser the Poet and Teacher " and on " The Heroines of Spenser."

#### THE ENGLISH DRAMA BEFORE SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare is so much a part of our English civilization, we accept his gift to us so easily, and are so familiar with his greatness, that it is well  
**Elizabethan drama.** to remind ourselves of his place as the king of all literature. Thomas Carlyle wrote of him : " I think the best judgment, not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is pointing to the conclusion that Shakespeare is the chief of all poets hitherto ; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left a record of himself in the way of literature;"\* and Emerson says, speaking for our own branch of the English people : " Of all books dependent upon their intrinsic excellence, Shakespeare is the one book of the world. . . Out of the circle of religious books, I set Shakespeare as the one unparalleled mind."† Criticism cannot explain how or why the country-bred son of a Warwickshire wool-dealer should have possessed this supreme gift ; it is the miracle of genius ; but we can partly understand how surrounding conditions favored the expression of Shakespeare's genius through a dramatic form. It is beyond our philosophy to analyze the nature of the mysterious force shut within a seed, although we may appreciate the

\* *Heroes and Hero Worship ; The Hero as Poet.*

† *Representative Men ; Shakespeare.*

conditions which help its development. Let us look at Shakespeare in the light of some of those surroundings in which his genius worked.

Shakespeare did not create that dramatic era of which he was the greatest outcome ; he availed himself of it. He lived in the midst of one of the world's few great dramatic periods — a period equaled only, if equaled at all, by the greatest epoch in the drama of Greece. The Elizabethan drama was more than a national amusement. More fully than any other form of literary or artistic expression, it interpreted and satisfied the craving of the time for vigorous life and action. The theater was then, as in classic Greece, a national force, and a means of national education. An immense popular impulse was back of the Elizabethan dramatist. The wooden play-houses were daily filled with turbulent crowds, and scores of playwrights were busy supplying the insatiable public with countless dramas. Shakespeare was sustained by a hearty, if not always discriminating, appreciation ; he was stimulated by the fellowship, or rivalry, of a host of competitors.

At first sight, this dramatic activity may seem to have sprung suddenly into being in answer to a new popular demand. The first regular tragedy was about the time of Shakespeare's birth, and he was twelve years old before the first regularly licensed theater was erected in England (1576).

But the passion for life and action did not create the Elizabethan drama out of nothing ; it rather

Shakespeare  
part of a dra-  
matic period.

The prepara-  
tion for the  
Elizabethan  
drama.

transformed and adapted to its use a drama which had been established for centuries. This drama, brought into England some time after the Norman Conquest, had grown out of the need which the Church felt for some means of popular religious instruction. Short scenes, or plays, illustrating some legend of the saints, or Bible story, were acted first by the clergy, and later by the professional players, or by the Guilds. These Miracle plays, as they were called, because they dealt with wonderful or supernatural subjects, were popular in England during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and continued to be acted in Shakespeare's time. There were other kinds of plays, of which we need not speak particularly—the Moral play, an allegorical performance, intended to teach some moral lesson, and the Interlude, a short scene or dialogue, often played between (*interludo*) the courses at feasts. The earliest Moral play extant dates from the time of Henry VI., but mention is made of some still earlier. Interludes were composed by John Heywood, in Henry VIII.'s reign, and produced at court. The introduction of historical characters among the allegorical personages of the morality play—Riches, Death, Folly, and the like—was an important step toward the regular historical drama.\* These early plays, although full of interest for the student, have, as a rule, but little poetic merit. To our modern eyes they often seem irreverent and

\* Bale's *King Johan* is one of the earliest examples of this, but it was probably not printed until 1538, and had little influence. Another early play is the *Conflict of Conscience*.

lacking in dignity, but they pleased and instructed a simple-minded and illiterate audience; they cultivated and kept alive a taste for acting, and so prepared the way for a dramatic development, under the re-creating touch of the new learning.

In taking the further step from the Interlude to the more regular dramatic forms, England was helped by the revival of classical learning, and by the example of Italy. Her first regular comedy, the *Ralph Roister Doister* of Nicholas Udall, 1551, was written in imitation of the Latin comic dramatist Plautus; her first tragedy, the *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, of Sackville and Norton, while it dealt with a subject in the legendary history of England, followed the style of the Latin tragic poet Seneca. The numerous translations from the latter writer\* are a proof of his influence and popularity. But the forces creating a drama in England were too strong and original to make it a mere classic imitation; it might borrow from Rome or Italy, but it had vitality and character of its own.

The beginning of regular drama.

Among the native forces thus shaping a new drama out of mediæval Miracle plays or classic adaptations, was the intense patriotic pride which, in the days of the Armada, stirred England to more widespread interest in her history, and to a warmer pleasure in the

Influence of patriotism on growth of drama.

\* Between 1559 and 1566 five English authors applied themselves to the task of translating Seneca. Ten of his plays, collected and printed together in 1581, remain a monument of the English poets' zeal in studying the Roman pedagogue.



image of her triumphs. The chronicle histories of England were ransacked for subjects, and her past reviewed in dramas which were the forerunners of Shakespeare's great series of English historical plays. Among the early works of this class are, *The Famous Victories of Henry V.*, acted before 1588, *Sir Thomas More*, about 1590, *The Troublesome Raign of King John*, printed in 1591, and *The New Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters, Gonerill, Ragan, and Cordella*, acted two years later (1593). The English historical drama was thus a native growth brought into being by a genuine national impulse. It helps us to estimate the motive power of this impulse if we turn a moment from the drama to other forms of literature.

Patriotism, while thus molding the drama, was giving new life to history and verse. Learned men like Stowe, Harrison, and Holinshed, were embodying in prose painstaking researches into English history and antiquities. Holinshed and Harrison's *Description and History of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (First edition, 1577), a good example of works of this class, supplied material to Shakespeare for his historical plays. In the same way an enormous quantity of verse draws its inspiration from England and her history.

William Warner set forth the history of England from the Deluge to the time of Elizabeth in a much read poem of ten thousand lines (*Albion's England*, 1586); Samuel Daniel dealt with English history in his *Civil Wars* (1595); later Michael Drayton



wrote his *Heroical Epistles*, his splendid ballad, the *Battle of Agincourt*, and *The Polyolbion* (1613),—"my strange Herculean toil" he appropriately calls it, a poetical description of England in thirty books, containing about one hundred thousand lines. All these writers were bidding people to

"Look on England,  
The Empress of the European isles,  
The mistress of the ocean, her navies  
Putting a girdle round about the world."\*

From the historical plays already named we pass easily to a higher order of drama in the *Edward II.* of Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare's great predecessor, until we reach the climax of England's patriotic drama in the work of Shakespeare himself.

About 1580 we find the drama rapidly taking form in London through the work of a group of rising dramatists, many of whom brought from the universities a tincture of the new Shakespeare's  
predecessors. learning. Prominent among these were John Lyly (b. 1553, d. 1606), the Euphuist, who produced a play before 1584; Thomas Kyd (d. about 1595), whose *Spanish Tragedy* was written in a ranting and extravagant style much ridiculed by Shakespeare and the later dramatists; George Peele (b. about 1558, d. about 1598), whose chronicle of *Edward I.* (1593) holds an important place in the development of the historical drama; Robert Greene (b. 1560, d. 1592), who, like many of his fellow playwrights, led a wild and dissipated life, friendless,

\* Massinger, *The Maid of Honor*, act i. scene 1.

except in a few alehouses. In his *Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Greene gives some charming scenes of English country life. The name of this unhappy writer will always be associated with his spiteful and jealous reference to Shakespeare as an "upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hyde*, supposes he is as able to bombast out a blanke-verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is, in his own conceyt, the only 'Shake-scene' in a countrey."\* But, greater than all these in the tragic intensity of his genius and the swelling majesty of his "mighty line," was Christopher Marlowe (b. 1564, d. 1593), the immediate forerunner of Shakespeare. When Marlowe began to write, the form of the English drama was still unsettled. Under the influence of its classic models tragedy was inclined to be stiff, stilted, and formal; while in contrast with the work of the scholarly and somewhat artificial writers there were rude, popular interludes in jingling rhymes, full of rough, clownish tricks and jests, and without unity and proportion. Marlowe's fine touch did much to reduce this confusion to order. His verse is the finest before Shakespeare's; and stormy and riotous as was his life, his work shows the true artist's unselfish devotion to a high and beautiful ideal. Marlowe was the son of a Canterbury shoemaker, and was born two months before Shakespeare. He graduated at Cambridge and came to London in 1581 to plunge into the vortex

\* In his pamphlet, a kind of dying confession. Greene's *Groats Worth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*.

of reckless and lawless life that circled round the theater. Passionate, unquiet, ambitious, Marlowe is spoken of as an atheist and a blasphemer. Before he is thirty he is stabbed with his own dagger in a low tavern at Deptford. The touch of the unknown, which he thirsted for like his own *Faustus*, stops him in the midst of his doubts, his passionate longings, his defiance, his love-making, and his fame—and at length he is quiet.

Marlowe's earliest play (*Tamburlaine*, First Part before 1587, Second Part 1590) portrays the insatiable thirst for power, the spirit of the typical conqueror longing for "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown." Another of Marlowe's tragedies, *The Jew of Malta*, is generally thought to have furnished Shakespeare with some hints for his Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. *Edward II.* drew more firmly the lines of the English historical drama, while *Dr. Faustus*, with its magnificent bursts of poetry and the accumulating terror of its tragic close, is full of that overmastering longing for the unattainable which seems to have been the strongest characteristic of Marlowe's restless nature. In these famous lines from *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe himself seems to speak to us:

"Nature, that framed us of four elements  
Warring within our breast for regiment,  
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds ;  
Our souls whose faculties can comprehend  
The wondrous architecture of the world,  
And measure every wandering planet's course,  
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,  
And always moving as the restless spheres,  
Will us to wear ourselves and never rest—."

Plays were acted in England long before any theaters were built. The Miracle plays had been produced on temporary scaffolds, or on

**The theater.** a two-storied erection, something like a huge doll's house on wheels, called a *pageant*. The Interludes or the early dramas were often played before the Queen or before some great noble on a platform at one end of the huge halls, perhaps at a great banquet or festival. But plays were a popular pastime also, performed in the open air in the court-yards of the inns; and these square inn-yards, overlooked by the galleries or balconies which ran around the inclosing walls of the inn, are supposed to have furnished the model for the regular theaters. The growing delight in play-going seems to have produced a general demand for more permanent and commodious accommodations. One building regularly set apart for the performance of plays is known to have been in use before 1576. In that year the "Black-friars Theater" was opened, the first theater regularly licensed. From this time the playhouses rapidly increased, and when Shakespeare came up to London (about 1587) a number were in active operation. Shakespeare's own theater, "The Globe," built 1593, lay across the Thames from London in the "Bankside," a part of Southwark, close to the river. Other famous theaters of the day were "The Fortune," "The Rose," and "The Curtain," at the last of which Marlowe is known to have acted. The theaters were of two kinds, public and private. The first were large six-sided wooden buildings, roofed over above the stage and thatched, the pit or yard

being without shelter from the sun or rain. Galleries ran round the walls, as in the inn-yards. The stage projected into the pit, which was alive with disorderly crowds who stood on the bare ground, joking, fighting, or shoving to gain the best places. There was little attempt at scenery; in the old plays we find such significant stage directions as these: "Exit Venus; or, if you can conveniently, let a chair come down from the top of the stage and draw her up."\* In more than one place through the choruses of *Henry V.* Shakespeare seems to be impatient of the slender resources of his stage-setting, as when he asks:

"Can this cock-pit hold  
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very casques,  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?" †

And in the wonderful description that precedes the battle of Agincourt he complains:

"And so our scene must to the battle fly;  
Where (O for pity!) we shall much disgrace—  
With four or five most vile and ragged foils,  
Right ill-disposed, in brawl ridiculous—  
The name of Agincourt. Yet, sit and see,  
Minding true things by what their mockeries be." ‡

The private theaters were smaller and more comfortable than the public. They had seats in the pit

\* In Greene's *Alphonsus*—quoted by Collier, *Annals of the Stage*, vol. iii. p. 357.

† Chorus to *Henry V.* act i.

‡ Chorus to act iv.



and were entirely under roof. Performances were given by candle or torchlight, and the audiences were usually more select. The following description by Mr. Symonds gives us a vivid notion of the performance of a play in Shakespeare's time :

"Let us imagine that the red-lettered play-bill of a new tragedy has been hung out beneath the picture of Dame Fortune [*i. e.*, at "The Fortune" Theater, the great rival of Shakespeare's Theater, "The Globe"]; the flag is flying from the roof, the drums have beaten, and the trumpets are sounding for the second time. It is three o'clock upon an afternoon of summer. We pass through the great door, ascend some steps, take our key from the pocket of our trunk hose, and let ourselves into our private room on the first or lowest tier. We find ourselves in a low, square building, not unlike a circus; smelling of sawdust and the breath of people. The yard below is crowded with simpering mechanics and 'prentices in greasy leathern jerkins, servants in blue frieze with their masters' badges on their shoulders, boys and grooms elbowing each other for bare standing ground and passing jests on their neighbors. Five or six young men are already seated before the curtain playing cards and cracking nuts to while away the time. A boy goes up and down among them offering various qualities of tobacco for sale and furnishing lights for the smokers. The stage itself is strewn with rushes; and from the jutting tiled roof of the shadow supported by a couple of stout wooden pillars, carved with satyrs at the top, hangs a curtain of tawny-colored silk. This is drawn when the trumpets have sounded for the third time, and an actor in a black velvet mantle, with a crown of bays upon his flowing wig, struts forward, bowing to the audience. He is the Prologue.

"The Prologue ends.

"The first act now begins. There is nothing but the rudest scenery; a battlemented city wall behind the stage, with a placard hung out upon it, indicating that the scene is

Rome. As the play proceeds this figure of a town makes way for some wooden rocks and a couple of trees, to signify the Hyrcanian forest. A damsel wanders alone in the woods, lamenting her sad case. Suddenly a cardboard dragon is thrust from the sides upon the stage and she takes to flight. The first act closes with a speech from an old gentleman clothed in antique robes, whose white beard flows down upon his chest. He is the chorus. . . . The show concludes with a prayer for the Queen's Majesty uttered by the actors on their knees." \*

#### WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

There is on Henley Street, in Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, an old house, with gabled roof and low-ceilinged rooms, which every year is made the object of thousands of pilgrimages. Here William Shakespeare was born, on or about the 23d day of April, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, the son of a small farmer in the neighboring village of Snitterfield, added to his regular business of glover sundry dealings in wool, corn, and hides, and possibly the occupation of butcher. His mother, Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer near Stratford, was connected with one of the oldest and most distinguished families in Warwickshire. The Ardens came of both Norman and Saxon blood, and thus represented "the two great race elements that have gone to the making of the typical modern Englishman." † The influences about

\* *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*, by J. A. Symonds, p. 289.

† V. Article on "Shakespeare," by J. Spencer Baynes, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition.

Shakespeare's youth were such as growing genius instinctively appropriates to its use. Then, as now, Warwickshire was full of that abundant and peaceful beauty which has come to represent for us the ideal English landscape. In Shakespeare's day its northern part was overgrown by the great forest of Arden, a bit of primeval woodland like that which we enter in *As You Like It*; while southward of the river Avon, which runs diagonally across the county, stretched an open region of fertile farm land. Here were warm, sunny slopes, gay with those wildflowers that bloom forever for the world in Shakespeare's verse; low-lying pastures, where meditative cows stand knee-deep in grass, and through which wind the brimming waters of slow-flowing and tranquil streams. Stratford lies in this more southern portion; but in Shakespeare's day the forest of Arden reached to within an easy distance of it for an active youth. Near his native town the young Shakespeare could loiter along country lanes, past hawthorn hedgerows or orchards white with May, coming now and then on some isolated farmhouse or on the cluster of thatched cottages which marked a tiny village. There was Snitterfield, where he must have gone to visit his grandfather; Shottery, where he wooed and won Ann Hathaway. There, in the midst of this rich midland scenery, was his own Stratford, with its low wood-and-plaster houses and straggling streets, its massive grammar school, where, as a boy, he conned his Lilly's Latin grammar. A little apart, by the glassy Avon, stood old Trinity Church, its lofty spire rising above the

surrounding elms. There is abundant evidence that Shakespeare loved Warwickshire with a depth of attachment that nothing could alter. These early surroundings entered into and became a permanent part of his life and genius, and his works are full of country sights and sounds. He shows us rural England in such scenes as that of the sheep-shearing in *The Winter's Tale*; he contrasts the free woodland with the court in *As You Like It*; he defines for us the essence of the ideal shepherd's life,\* and in many a song, written to be sung in crowded London theaters, his imagination escapes to the fields and flowers of his native Warwickshire.

And Shakespeare's Warwickshire added to natural beauty the charm of local legends and the traditions of a splendid past. Within easy reach of Stratford lay Warwick, with its fine old castle, once the home of the great king-maker of the Wars of the Roses. The whole region was bound by tradition and association to that great civil strife which is one of the chief themes of Shakespeare's plays on English history. Near by was Kenilworth, the castle of Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Leicester, where the Queen was received (1575) with those magnificent revels, at which the boy Shakespeare may have been present. Traveling companies of players seem to have visited Stratford during Shakespeare's early years, whose performances he doubtless witnessed. He may even have gazed at the wonders of a Miracle play at Coventry, a town some twenty miles dis-

\* Lines beginning, "To sit upon a hill," 3 *Henry VI.*, act ii. scene 5.



tant, where these plays were frequently produced by the Guilds.

Besides all that he gained from such surroundings and experiences, Shakespeare had received some instruction at the town grammar school.

#### School.

Here he acquired, or began to acquire, what his learned and somewhat pedantic fellow-dramatist, Ben Jonson, called his "small Latin and less Greek," however much that may have been. In 1578 John Shakespeare, who had been prosperous and respected, began to lose money, and it is generally supposed that, in consequence, Shakespeare was taken from school and put to some employment. We are left to conjecture concerning these years of his life ; but we know that in 1582 he married Ann Hathaway, a woman eight years older than himself. A few years later, about 1585 to 1587, Shakespeare left Stratford and went up to London, as so many youthful adventurers are doing and have done, to seek his fortune. If we choose to believe a story which there seems no sufficient cause for entirely disregarding, the immediate reason for this step was Shakespeare's quarreling with a neighboring landed proprietor, Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote Hall. Shakespeare is said to have been brought before this gentleman for deer-stealing. "For this," says the original authority for the story; "he was prosecuted by that gentleman [Lucy], as he thought, somewhat too severely ; and, in order to revenge the ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled



the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time and shelter himself in London." \* This story is probably not without some foundation ; but, in any case, Shakespeare's establishment in London is exactly what his circumstances would lead us to expect. In 1585 he had a wife and two children to support, his father's money affairs had gone from bad to worse, and Shakespeare, strong as we may imagine in the hopes and confidence of youth and genius, had every reason to feel provincial Stratford too cramped for his powers.

" The spirit of a youth  
That means to be of note, begins betimes." †

In addition to all this, James and Richard Burbage, two famous actors in the company with which Shakespeare became connected, are supposed to have been Warwickshire men. If this were the case, Shakespeare may have been encouraged by the prospect of their assistance.

When Shakespeare reached London (1587?) the drama was rapidly gaining in popular favor ; clever young playwrights were giving it form, and Marlowe had recently produced his *Tamburlaine*. We know nothing of Shakespeare's life during his first few years in London. It is supposed that he studied French and Italian under John Florio, a noted teacher of that time. There is a story that he was first employed at

\* Nicholas Rowe, *Life of Shakespeare*.

† *Antony and Cleopatra*, act iv. scene 4.

a theater in holding the horses of those who rode to the play, and that he had a number of boys to assist him. This, however, is generally distrusted. We do know that Shakespeare made a place for himself among the crowd of struggling dramatists, arousing the envy of Greene by his rapid advance in favor; and that by 1592 he was established as a successful actor and author. In some way he seems to have commended himself to the young Earl of Southampton, to whom he dedicated his first poem, the *Venus and Adonis*, in 1593. Shakespeare seems to have begun his work as a dramatist by adapting and partially rewriting old plays. *Titus Andronicus*, a coarse and brutal tragedy, was probably one of the plays thus touched up by Shakespeare in his prentice period. His arrangement of *Henry VI.* (Part I.) was brought out in 1592, and seems to have done much to bring him into notice. Among these earlier plays (written before 1598) were *The Comedy of Errors*, in which Shakespeare joins the imitators of Plautus; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, into which many characteristic features of the Italian comedy were introduced; and thus we see that Shakespeare, like the other dramatists of his time, turned at the very outset to classic models and contemporary Italy. Professor Dowden points out that certain characters and situations in this last-mentioned play were used again in a modified form in the later Italian study, *The Merchant of Venice*. To an Elizabethan audience there was a glamour in these Italian backgrounds, even in the casual mention of names and places, that came freighted with

suggestion. To the Englishman of Shakespeare's day, the Italy of the Renaissance was a region of wonder and inspiration. Its marble palaces, its unmatched and curious treasures of art, its learning, its luxurious magnificence and pagan refinements of pleasure, the warmth of its southern nights, the liquid blue of its southern skies, these things intoxicated the colder and more sober English nature and bewildered the English conscience. And this magic Shakespeare felt and helped to make his countrymen feel also.

The poetic fantasy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also belongs to this period. But Shakespeare also shared in the intense patriotism of the time ; in 1594 he produced *Richard II.*, and the other plays of his great historical series followed in rapid succession. At Christmas of this year Shakespeare is known to have acted with Burbage and the other members of the Lord Chamberlain's company before Queen Elizabeth. Everything indicates that, so far as his worldly affairs were concerned, Shakespeare steadily prospered. In these active and hard-working years he grew in fortune as well as in reputation ; he showed himself a practical and capable man of business as well as a transcendent genius, and by his character he won the love and respect of his fellows. By 1597 he was able to buy a home for himself in his beloved Stratford. In 1599 he was one of the proprietors of "The Globe Theater," built in that year. In 1606 a further purchase of 107 acres of land at Stratford is made by William Shakespeare, *Gentleman*. Thus, while he is

adding to the treasures of the world's literature, the thoughts and ambitions of this country-bred Shakespeare seem to return and center about the Stratford of his youth.

Up to this time, Shakespeare's success had been in comedy and in the historical drama. He had, indeed, written *Romeo and Juliet*, that rapturous and romantic tragedy of ill-fated love, and, in scattered passages, had given hints of his power to sound the depths of yet profounder passion. In 1601 he began, in *Julius Caesar*, the great series of plays which rank him among the supreme tragic poets of the world. In play after play he now turns from the humorous and gayer side of life to face its most terrible questions, to reveal to us the very depths of human weakness, agony, and crime. Some think that these great tragedies were written out of the suffering and bitterness of Shakespeare's own experience, that, through the loss or treachery of friends, or some other personal sorrow, life at this time grew dark and difficult for him. Whatever griefs gave him this insight, it is certain that he somehow gained the knowledge for which even genius must pay the price of suffering. Shakespeare exhibits in the plays of this period a full understanding of the darkest aspects of life. Here is shown us sin, the hideous ulcer at the heart of life, poisoning its very source, degrading souls, and bringing with it a train of miseries which confound alike the innocent and the guilty.

In *Macbeth* we are present at the ruin of a soul, standing irresolute at the brink of the first crime and



then hurrying recklessly from guilt to guilt; in *Othello* we see the helplessness of a "noble nature" in the hands of fiendish ingenuity and malice; Ophelia, the "fair rose of May," and Hamlet, perished with the guilty King and Queen; the outcast Lear, "more sinned against than sinning," and the spotless Cordelia fall victims to a monstrous wickedness:

"Not the first  
Who with best meaning have incurred the worst."

To Chaucer's shrewd eye and sunny good humor Shakespeare added the sublime depth and earnestness of a far rarer and richer nature. If he was tolerant, like Chaucer, it was not because he was capable of an easy indifference, or "peyned him not eche crokked to redresse"; it was because, knowing the worst of life, he could yet accept it with cheerfulness and hope. For Shakespeare always shows us that high endeavors, greatness, and innocence cannot really fail so long as they remain true to themselves, because they are their own exceeding great reward. It is enough that Brutus was "the noblest Roman of them all," though he lie dead for a lost cause under the gaze of the conquering Octavius. Worldly success may mean spiritual ruin; worldly ruin, spiritual success. Shakespeare does not explain the dark riddle of life; he does say with unequaled earnestness: "Woe unto them that call darkness light and light darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."

Shakespeare is no apologist for error; in his plays



sin is laid bare in all its repulsive baseness and deformity, a root of bitterness fouling the sweet springs of life. The great moral distinctions which—more than differences of class, or race, or intellect—separate soul from soul, are everywhere sharply and firmly drawn. If Richard III., or Iago, or the two woman fiends in *Lear*, reveal the spirit of wickedness incarnate, in no poet are virtue and holiness more lovely and divine. Our conceptions of the worth and dignity of humanity are raised, our ideals purified and ennobled, by the contemplation of the heroic in Shakespeare's world. Cordelia, Virgilia, Miranda, Portia, elevate and sanctify our thoughts of womanhood by their loveliness and purity; the knightly courage of Henry V., the faithfulness of Kent, the blunt honesty and loyalty of Faulconbridge, the Roman constancy of Horatio, all inspire us with a generous admiration for manly virtue. "Shakespeare," says Coleridge, "is an author, of all others, calculated to make his readers better as well as wiser." Yet with all his uncompromising morality, his stern condemnation of sin, Shakespeare pours out over the faults and frailties of the erring creatures he has made, the fullness of a marvelous tenderness and pity. The humility of a great nature under the sense of its own short-comings, the recognition of an ideal of excellence so stainless that all fail alike in attaining it, these personal traits, it seems to us, shine out through Shakespeare's lessons of forgiveness and of charity. Throughout all of Shakespeare's work, this compassion for human weakness, this large-hearted sympathy with human failures and

mistakes, sheds a gracious and kindly light, but in two plays, *Measure for Measure* and *The Merchant of Venice*, the need of mercy is given an especial prominence. In the first, Isabella, imploring mercy for her condemned brother, exclaims :

“ Alas ! Alas !

Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once ;  
And He that might the vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy. How would you be,  
If He, which is the top of judgment, should  
But judge you as you are ? ” \*

And in the same spirit, Portia declares :

“ That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation ; we do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy.” †

Thus Shakespeare, hating and condemning sin, teaches us that our human weakness requires another law than that of rigid justice. Neither in our heavenly nor our earthly relations dare we “stand upon our bond.” Shylock, intrenched in the support of a lower and earthly law, fails to see upon what compulsion he “*must*” be merciful. But Shakespeare, through Portia, points to the obligation of the higher law ; he tells us that there is something not “nominated in the bond,” even charity ; the grace of a mutual forbearance without which human life would be literally unlivable. He enforces in his way the parable of the unjust steward, “Shouldst

\* *Measure for Measure*, act ii. scene 2.

† *Merchant of Venice*, act iv. scene 1.

not thou, also, have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?"

Toward the close of his life, Shakespeare passed in his art out of his tragic mood to write some of the loveliest of his comedies, with undiminished freshness and creative vigor. The imagination which at the beginning of Shakespeare's work budded forth in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the fairy-land of Oberon and Titania, gives being to the dainty spirit Ariel, speeding at the command of Prospero, or cradled in the bell of the cowslip; while in *The Winter's Tale*, the stress of tragedy over, we can fancy ourselves back again in Warwickshire with Shakespeare, breathing its country odors and gazing on the

"daffodils

That come before the swallow dares and take  
The winds of March with beauty!"\*

As Shakespeare's fortune and engagements permitted him, he seems to have spent more and more time in his native place; and he appears  
Retirement  
to Stratford. to have returned there about 1610 or 1612. He had said his last to the world; for a few silent years that appeal profoundly to our imaginative interest, he lived in the midst of the scenes and associations of his boyhood, and then, on the 23d of April, 1616, the fifty-second anniversary, it is supposed, of his birth, he closed his eyes on the world.

Shakespeare speaks to all times and nations for the English nature and genius. He gathers and sums up

\* *Winter's Tale*, act iv. scene 3.

the best that has gone before him—the Celtic wit, fancy, and deftness; the Teutonic solidity and sincerity, its earnestness, morality, and reverence for the unseen. To this capacious nature, drawing its forces from the genius of two races, awakened Italy gives her tribute; and through it the English Renaissance finds its supreme poetic utterance. This man, then, stands for the English people, a king over them for all time. “Here, I say,” Carlyle writes, “is an English king whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments can dethrone! This king, Shakespeare, does he not shine in crowned sovereignty over us all as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs; indestructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the nations of Englishmen a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of parish constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another: ‘Yes, this Shakespeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him.’”\*

\* “The Hero as Poet,” *Heroes and Hero Worship*, by Thomas Carlyle.

## TABLE OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

(F. J. Furnivall)

I. PRE-SHAKESPEAREAN  
GROUP.*Touched by Shakespeare.*

Titus Andronicus (1588-90).

1 Henry VI. (1590-91).

## II. EARLY COMEDIES.

Love's Labor's Lost (1590).

Comedy of Errors (1591).

Two Gentlemen of Verona  
(1592-93).Midsummer Night's Dream  
(1593-94).III. MARLOWE-SHAKESPEARE  
GROUP.*Early History.*

2 and 3 Henry VI. (1591-92).

Richard III. (1593).

## IV. EARLY TRAGEDY.

Romeo and Juliet (? two dates,  
1591, 1596-97).

## V. MIDDLE HISTORY.

Richard II. (1594).

King John (1595).

## VI. MIDDLE COMEDY.

Merchant of Venice (1596).

## VII. LATER HISTORY.

*History and Comedy united.*

1 and 2 Henry IV. (1597-98).

Henry V. (1599).

## VIII. LATER COMEDY.

(a) *Rough and Boisterous  
Comedy.*

Taming of the Shrew (? 1597).

Merry Wives (? 1598).

(b) *Joyous, Refined, Romantic.*Much Ado About Nothing  
(1598).

As You Like It (1599).

Twelfth Night (1600-1601).

(c) *Serious, Dark, Ironical.*

All's Well (? 1601-1602).

Measure for Measure (1603).

Troilus and Cressida (? 1603  
revised 1607 ?).

## IX. MIDDLE TRAGEDY.

Julius Cæsar (1601).

Hamlet (1602).

## X. LATER TRAGEDY.

Othello (1604).

Lear (1605).

Macbeth (1606).

Antony and Cleopatra (1607).

Coriolanus (1608).

Timon (1607-1608).

## XI. ROMANCES.

Pericles (1608).

Cymbeline (1609).

Tempest (1610).

Winter's Tale (1610-11)).

## XII. FRAGMENTS.

Two Noble Kinsmen (1612).

Henry VIII. (1612-13).

*Poems.*

Venus and Adonis (? 1592).

Lucrece (1593-94).

Sonnets (? 1595-1605).



## STUDY LIST

### SHAKESPEARE

1. EDITIONS. There are many admirable editions of Shakespeare adapted to school use. Among these may be mentioned those of William J. Rolfe, of Rev. Henry N. Hudson, and of William Aldis Wright. Certain plays have been included in the Riverside Classics (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) and will be found cheap and convenient.

The "Cambridge," 9 vols. (unexpurgated), is a good standard edition.

For advanced work the "Variorum" edition of Horace Howard Furness, now in progress, will be found invaluable. At present (1894) this edition includes the following plays: *Hamlet* (2 vols.), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*.

2. GRAMMARS, LEXICONS, BIOGRAPHY, CRITICISMS, ETC. The main object of the student who approaches the works of Shakespeare primarily as literature is to cultivate his powers of appreciation and enjoyment. His first aim is to enter imaginatively into the greatest poetry of the world; this aim should never be obscured by using the plays as mere material for the study of language or grammar, or by laying undue stress on "doubtful passages," or worrying over them as so many verbal puzzles. On the other hand, our enjoyment of Shakespeare rests largely on a solid basis of understanding; appreciation often depends upon the thoroughness of our study, for as there are many things in reading Shakespeare that we must *feel*, there are also many things that we must *know*. We must, therefore, know something of Shakespeare's grammar, his use of words, his local or contemporary allusions; thoroughness and minuteness cannot be too strongly insisted on, provided, that is, that they are used to increase our intelligent enjoyment, that they are made a means, and not an end. For this purpose the following will be found of the greatest value: Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar* (Macmillan); Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon* (in translation, Berlin, George Reimer; London, Williams & Norgate); Craik's *English of Shakespeare*,

*illustrated in a philological commentary on his Julius Cæsar*, edited by William J. Rolfe; Mrs. Cowden Clarke's *Concordance to Shakespeare*; Mrs. H. H. Furness' *Concordance to Poems*.

In biography, criticism, etc., the following will be found helpful for general use: Dowden's *Shakespeare Primer*; Dowden's *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art*; Dowden's *Introduction to Shakespeare*, Elze's *Illustrated Life of Shakespeare*, Knight's *Life of Shakespeare*, J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps' *Life of Shakespeare*, F. G. Fleay's *Chronicle History of the Life and Works of William Shakespeare*. Baynes' article on "Shakespeare" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition, is especially valuable for study of early environment. This has been recently published separately. Hudson's *Shakespeare, His Life, Art, and Character*; Hunter's *Illustrations of the Life and Studies of Shakespeare*, Gervinus' *Shakespeare's Commentaries*, Lowell's essay in *My Study Windows*, R. J. Moulton's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*.

GENERAL NOTES AND REFERENCES. Pollard's *English Miracle Plays*, Keltie's *British Dramatists*, Symonds' *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*, Church's *Life of Bacon*, essay on "Marlowe" in Henry Kingsley's *Fireside Studies. Elizabethan Songs*, A. H. Bullen's *England's Helicon, Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age*, Bell's *Songs from the Dramatists*. Thayer's *Six Best English Plays*, Katherine Lee Bates' *English Religious Drama*.

3. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY. *a.* All criticisms, commentaries, notes, and the like, should be made strictly subordinate to the careful and independent study of the play itself. An intimate acquaintance with the play through careful and repeated reading is the first great essential, and the student will find it both more profitable and more interesting to be as far as possible his own critic and commentator, before resorting to the work of others. He should try to do his own thinking, rather than rely entirely on others to do it for him.

*b.* When the play has been carefully read, the *sources of the plot* may be taken up, and the raw material with which Shakespeare worked compared with the finished shape given

to it by his art. Thus the Roman plays should be compared with North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, which Shakespeare followed with unusual closeness ; the English historical plays should send the student to the "Chronicles" on which Shakespeare relied, etc.

c. *The date*, or probable date, of the composition of the play must be noted, and its precise chronological place in Shakespeare's work carefully studied. (For this *v.* Table of Shakespeare's Works, p. 148, or that in Dowden's *Shakespeare Primer*. This raises the question of its possible or probable connection with the plays immediately before or after it in order of composition.

d. The student is now in a position to define his opinion of the chief characters of the play. In doing this he should take into account the manners and customs of the time in which they lived, and the especial circumstances in which they are placed. It is helpful to detach everything spoken throughout the play by the particular character under consideration, and consider it separately. *Character contrast*. The way in which any of the characters are contrasted should also be studied, and the bearing of this character-contrast on the general idea or purpose of the play, considered. The characters may be similarly contrasted or compared with those in the other plays.

e. The construction of the play, the development of the plot, must be examined ; also the use of the dramatic background, *i. e.*, all the natural surroundings and accessories which help to heighten the tone or general effect of the work as a whole.

f. It remains for the student to sum up all he has gained, and endeavor to grasp the main idea, or underlying motive, which contributes to the artistic unity of the whole.

4. STUDY OF SPECIAL PLAYS. The following plays are suggested as especially suitable for school use : *Julius Cæsar*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

For somewhat advanced classes : *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Richard II.*, *Henry V.*, *The Tempest*.

*Study of Macbeth* for advanced class, according to the general plan above suggested.

(1) Read carefully in one of the editions given above.

(2) *Sources of the plot.* See Holinshed's *Chronicle*, "Variorum" edition of H. H. Furness, and Dowden's *Shakespeare Primer*. History of the Period, Holinshed, etc.

What was the social condition of Scotland at this time? and how did its civilization compare with other countries? Was the time in which Macbeth lived an age of superstition, and was Scotland a particularly superstitious country? What was the law as to witchcraft, and the popular belief, in Shakespeare's time? (See Scott's *Witchcraft and Demonology*.)

(3) When was *Macbeth* written? To which period does it then belong?

(4) *Characters of Macbeth and of Lady Macbeth.* Give an opinion of the character of Macbeth; how much do you consider he was influenced by the witches' prophecies? Do you think he had any idea of the King's murder in his mind before his meeting with the witches? If so, what is there in the play that suggests such a possibility? What is the effect of Lady Macbeth on her husband? Why does Macbeth hesitate to murder Duncan? Is the wickedness of the action the strongest argument against it in Macbeth's mind? What is the effect on Macbeth's character of yielding to this temptation? does he show any remorse? Show some point in which the character of Macbeth presents a contrast to that of Banquo. What do you think of Lady Macbeth? How does she compare with Macbeth? Which had the greater courage? Which do you think had the more highly organized nature? How does the character of Lady Macbeth compare with Goneril and Regan in *King Lear*, and why should the former be a more interesting study, and call forth more discussion than the two latter? Contrast the characters of Macbeth and Hamlet.

(5) *Construction and development of plot.* Note that *Macbeth* is a striking instance of dramatic unity. One source of unity to be found in the rapid and logical development of plot. We find great quickness of action, incident follows incident, crime



succeeds to crime, with a velocity which in itself helps to give unity of tone.

*a.* State the extent of time covered by the whole play.

*b.* Show how quickly the witches' prophecies were fulfilled.

Find up to what point in the play Macbeth appears successful. Then note his series of failures. Show how the dramatic background is suited to the plot. Compare the use of natural surroundings in this and other plays. In what other tragedy does a storm add to the effect? What kind of play should we expect from the background of the opening scene? What natural features besides the storm are in harmony with all that follows? Show how Shakespeare has selected night instead of day for a great part of the main action.

Collect and compare frequent allusions to darkness and to sleep found throughout the play.

How are the witches in keeping with the tone of the play? What was the belief concerning witches in Macbeth's time? How do they suggest the Three Fates? Who was Hecate? *Note* Shakespeare's use of the supernatural in this and other plays: The fairies in *Midsummer Night's Dream*; Caliban and Ariel in *The Tempest*; also the ghosts that appear to murderers, as Julius Cæsar, Richard III., Banquo.

(6) *Idea or motive of play.* The student should by this time have arrived at some idea concerning the underlying motive of the play. He may now safely test this by comparing his own judgment with the views of the commentators. For reference *v.* Biography and Criticism, § ii. *supra*.

*Suggestions for Study of Julius Cæsar.* *a.* General scope and story of the play; sources of the plot; date; place in order of plays; relation to other plays.

*b. The characters:*

*Cæsar.* How does Shakespeare here present him? How does Shakespeare speak of him in other plays? Why is he subordinated in this play? We can conceive of a drama built up around Cæsar as its central figure, which should lead up to his death as its final catastrophe, and in which all our sympathies should be enlisted on his side. Why does not Shakespeare adopt this method? Here Cæsar drops out early in the



action. What, then, gives the play its unity ; or is it defective in unity ?

*Brutus.* Analyze his character. Do you agree with the eulogy pronounced over his dead body ? Is he more or less important than Cæsar in the action ? If more, explain why.

*Cassius.* His character. Contrast it with that of Brutus. How is his superiority to Brutus as a practical man of affairs shown in the play ?

*Contrast* Brutus and Cæsar ; Cassius and Cæsar. What is the immediate cause of Cæsar's fall ? Contrast this with cause of the failure of Brutus. Cite other Shakespearian characters whose fall is attributable to causes similar to those which ruined Cæsar or Brutus. Discuss other instances of success and failure in Shakespeare.

*c. Unity of action.* From what is it derived ? Point out the unity of action and its cause in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, in Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, and in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. On what does it depend in *Julius Cæsar* ?

*General thoughts* on the play. Can any more general reason be given for the failure of Brutus than the one assigned ? What does Shakespeare tell us Brutus and Cassius really fight against ?

*d. Further points to be considered.* Study may also be made of Shakespeare's treatment of the mob. *Cf.*, on this point, *Coriolanus*, *Henry VI.*, etc.

#### FRANCIS BACON

The greatest names in Elizabethan literature are those of the dramatists and the poets, yet the intel-

**Elizabethan**      lectual advance of the time showed  
**prose.**            itself, also, in a rapid development of  
                      prose. English prose had made but

little progress between the time of Wyclif and the middle of the sixteenth century. Such works as Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485), More's *History of Richard III.* (written 1513), and Tyndale's *Trans-*

*lation of the Bible* (1525), show prose struggling toward a more honorable place; but it is not until the early years of the reign of Elizabeth, when life and thought were expanding on every side, that the art of English prose-writing may be said to fairly begin. The effect of the Renaissance may be seen in the learned prose of Ascham (1515-1568), and in the euphuistic intricacies of John Lyly (1553-1606). Literary criticism springs into life in such works as Sidney's *Defense of Poesy* (1580-1581), or Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy* (1589). Prose fiction is represented by Sidney's elaborate romance, the *Arcadia* (1590), and by countless shorter stories from the rapid pens of Peele, Greene, and other struggling dramatists. Besides all this we have, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, an abundant prose literature of history and travel, and innumerable pamphlets on the questions of the day. In theology, Richard Hooker published *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (first four books, 1594); a great work, which has been called "the first monument of splendid literary prose that we possess."\* This growth of English prose, in many directions, can only be hinted at, nor can we stop to consider Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, or Sir Thomas Browne, writers who occupy a high place in the literature of the early seventeenth century, by their quaintness or majesty of style. Out of this wide range we will select one writer, Francis Bacon, for a somewhat more extended study.

Francis Bacon was born in London, January 22, 1561. His father was Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord

\* *English Literature Primer*, S. Brooke, p. 79.

Keeper of the Great Seal, and one of the most trusted of the early statesmen of Elizabeth; a yet

**Bacon's life.** more famous statesman, Lord Burleigh, was his uncle by marriage. From his earliest years, Bacon was thus connected with the court and with public life. When he was eighteen, his prospects were greatly changed by the sudden death of his father. Bacon, who was the younger son, was thus left insufficiently provided for, and was compelled to make his own way in the world. He accordingly entered upon the study of the law, and although Lord Burleigh showed no disposition to assist him, his advance was exceedingly rapid. He was made a barrister in 1582, Solicitor General in 1601, Attorney General in 1613, and Lord Chancellor in 1617. From this brilliant public success we get no idea of Bacon's inner life and deepest aspirations. He declared, in a letter to Lord Burleigh, written at the outset of his career, "I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends, as I have moderate civil ends; for I have taken all knowledge to be my province." He early resolved that he would strive to benefit the race by the discovery of truth; and, although he seems at times to have been diverted by worldly necessities or worldly ambitions, he was always true at heart to his lofty purpose. From his inability to reconcile contending interests—the love of place and power, with the unselfish devotion to knowledge—springs the tragedy of Bacon's life. In 1621 Bacon's worldly ambitions were overthrown at a stroke. He was accused of having taken bribes in his office of Lord Chancellor. He piteously confessed

the charge, and was henceforth a ruined man in reputation and in fortune. Bacon spent the remainder of his life in the composition of some of the great philosophical and scientific works on which his fame chiefly rests. With Bacon, the philosopher and scientist, however, the student of English literature is not directly concerned. The story of his closing years is very pitiable. "The Lord Chancellor," said his former patron, the young favorite, Buckingham, "the Lord Chancellor is so sick that he cannot live long." He still showed a brave front to the world, and moved about with a courtly retinue, like the shadow of his former self, so that Prince Charles said of him: "This man scorns to go out in a snuff;" but, for all this, the wound was deep, and bled inwardly. He caught cold from exposure, while engaged in a scientific experiment, and died a few days later, April 9, 1626.

Bacon is generally considered the greatest man of the Elizabethan age, with the single and inevitable exception of Shakespeare. Dean Church calls him "the brightest, richest, largest mind but one, in the age which had seen Shakespeare and his fellows." Yet, speaking strictly, Bacon holds a place in English literature almost by accident, and in spite of himself. He deliberately chose to be a Latin rather than an English writer, having no confidence in the stability of his own language, and believing that it would "at one time or another play the bank-rowte [bankrupt] with books." He even went so far as to have his *Advancement of Learning* translated from English into Latin, so convinced was he of the superi-



ority of the latter tongue. This book in its original form, the *Essays*, *The History of Henry VII.*, and a fragment, *The New Atlantis*, are substantially all that English prose can claim out of the great mass of Bacon's writings.

Yet, while Bacon thought little of his work as an English writer, and threw the weight of his immense energy in other directions, it is his English works that have best held their own. In Raleigh's prose we encounter more impassioned and noble eloquence, as in those rare places in the *History of the World*, where he seems to suddenly leave the ground and soar in the celestial spaces ; but Bacon's style has a more even excellence. Incidental and slight as Bacon's connection was with the literature of his own language, a high critical authority has recently pronounced him "one of the greatest writers of English prose before the accession of Charles I."\*

Incredible as it would have seemed to Bacon, it is by the *Essays* that he is best known to the general reader. By an "essay," Bacon meant

**His Essays.** the first trial, or weighing, of a subject, as distinguished from a finished treatise.† His Essays are pithy jottings on great subjects, informally set down, with no attempt to carry the thought to its full or natural conclusion. They read like the notebook of a profound thinker, a shrewd observer of life, a politic and active man of affairs. They are brief, suggestive, without an ornament, but

\* Saintsbury's *Elizabethan Literature*, p. 209.

† *Essay*=*assay*=a test, or examination of metals, O. F., *assai* ; Lat., *exagium*. See Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*.



closely packed with thought. They give us the concentrated results of Bacon's experience, and are often comparable to the proverbial sayings in which wise men have delighted since the days of Solomon. Often they go to the heart of the matter with one quick thrust, as in the famous sentence : " Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God's favor." \*

Bacon's own account of the object of the *Essays* is that he " endeavored to make them not vulgar, but of a nature whereof much should be found in experience and little in books ; so that they should be neither repetitions nor fancies " ; and he desires that they should " come home to men's business and bosoms."

Three editions of the *Essays* were published in Bacon's lifetime ; the first in 1597, the second in 1612, and the third in 1625. The first edition contained only ten essays, but by the third edition the number had been increased to fifty-eight.

We are apt to undervalue these essays on the first reading, and it is only through long familiarity that their wisdom and depth really reveal themselves. Some of them, such as the essay " Of Great Place," exhibit the high purposes of Bacon in strange and melancholy contrast to his actual performance. His life was a tragic contradiction, and in such declarations we ought not to believe him deliberately insincere. In thinking of his shortcomings we should remember, also, the nobility of his ideals.

\* Essay on " Adversity."

"If ever a man," says Dean Church, "had a great object in life and pursued it through good and evil report, through ardent hope and keen disappointment to the end, with unwearied patience and unshaken faith, it was Bacon, when he sought for the improvement of human knowledge, for the glory of God and the relief of man's estate." \*

#### SUMMARY OF ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

We have seen England, lifted by the common wave of thought and emotion, find an outlet for her richer and deeper experience in the creation of innumerable works in every department of literature. To the careful student of history, the vast possibilities, the latent powers of the English nature are apparent from the first; the genius of Chaucer strengthens his confidence in the correctness of his estimate, and he sees in the supreme literary greatness of England, under the kindly influence of the Renaissance, the splendid confirmation of this view.

We have approached this many-sided and inexhaustible period, chiefly through the study of three of its greatest men, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Bacon. The first is supreme as a poet of dream-land, the second supreme among all poets, the last is the great thinker who stands at the gateway of our modern science. These men are indeed pre-eminent, but other writers crowd about them, each great enough to stand first in a less abundant time. The extent and richness of Elizabethan literature has made our study

\* Church's *Life of Bacon*.

most limited, for so "spacious" is the time that on every hand are beautiful regions which we cannot even pretend to explore. For instance there is all the literature of criticism, the books in which Sir Philip Sidney, William Webbe, and George Puttenham discuss the art of poetry; there is the literature of travel, books such as Hakluyt's *Voyages* (1589), in which the narratives of great navigators like Sir Humphrey Gilbert or Sir Walter Raleigh were collected; there are all the books of short poems, Tottel's *Miscellany*, *England's Helicon*, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, and the like, which tell us how prodigal the country was in song in that full time when England was "a nest of singing birds." Then, too, there are series of sonnets, such as those of Spenser, Sidney, William Drummond (1585-1649); the last perhaps the most Italian in tone and among the most beautiful of them all. We have spoken briefly of the drama, but only extended study can make us realize its power and richness, the great host of busy playwrights and their extraordinary vigor and productiveness. We have alluded to the prose writers, but we must pass by the work of historian, theologian, romance-writer, and antiquarian, almost without mention. We are forced to leave these regions behind us unexplored, but it will help us to a firmer hold on this revival of learning period, if, before leaving it, we fix in our minds certain points of chronology that rise like milestones along the way. In doing this we must remember that such arbitrary divisions of literature are convenient, but not always exactly true, for literary periods are not

in reality thus sharply defined, but one flows almost imperceptibly into the other.

*First (cir. 1491–cir. 1513).* We may associate the last ten years of the fifteenth and the first ten or thirteen years of the sixteenth centuries with that band of teachers and educational reformers who may be called the missionaries of the new learning. This period reaches from about 1491, the year when Grocyn lectured on Greek at Oxford, to about 1510 or 1513, when Colet founded or completed the grammar school of St. Paul. Conspicuous in this time are Grocyn, Erasmus, Linacre, Colet, and, in his young manhood, Sir Thomas More.

*Second (1513–1557).* During this time the influence of Italy begins to be apparent in English poetry. Henry VIII. is a patron of learning; More publishes his *Utopia*, Heywood his *Interludes*, Roger Ascham his *Toxophilus* (1544), Coverdale and Cranmer their *Translations of the Bible* (1535 and 1537). Phaer's *Virgil*, Heywood's *Seneca*, and other translations of the classics appear. We note in *Ralph Roister Doister* the beginning of regular comedy. On the whole the new learning is making itself apparent in literature, and the time is full of the signs of promise.

*Third (1557–1579).* This period may be remembered as beginning with the publication of Tottel's *Miscellany* and ending with that of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*. During this interval the coming of a mighty outburst draws nearer, the work of preparation goes on in the publication of numerous classical translations; Sackville writes his *Induc-*



*tion to the Mirror for Magistrates* (1563); short poems and ballads appear in extraordinary numbers; the first regular tragedy is written, and innumerable Italian stories become popular. It is a time of growth, of preparation, and of expectancy.

*Fourth* (1579-1637). Between these years is the high noon of the English Renaissance. The period begins with the *Shepherd's Calendar*, the decisive entrance into literature of the greatest poet England had produced since Chaucer. The ten years succeeding are marked by the rapid advance of the drama under Lyly, Peele, Greene, Nash, and Marlowe, the immediate precursors of Shakespeare. In 1590, with the first installment of *The Faërie Queene* and the advent of Shakespeare, we are at the opening of twenty of the most glorious years in the whole twelve centuries of the literature. From about 1613, when Shakespeare ceased to write, we note the slow decline of this creative energy, and in 1637 two events occur which emphasize for us the ending of the old and the beginning of the new. In that year Ben Jonson died, the greatest surviving representative of the glory of the Elizabethans, and in that year also there was published the *Comus* of the young Puritan, John Milton. Thus the old order was changing, yielding place to the new.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PURITAN IN LITERATURE

#### THE ENGLAND OF MILTON

ALTHOUGH Shakespeare and Milton are familiarly linked together in our ordinary speech as the two greatest poets of England, in the whole spirit and nature of their work they have hardly anything in common. It is not merely that they are, for the most part, distinguished in separate provinces of poetry; that Shakespeare is above all the dramatic, and Milton the epic poet of the literature; the difference lies much deeper, and declares itself unmistakably at almost every point. Now, this is not entirely due to an inborn, personal difference in the genius of these two representative poets; it is due also to the difference in the spirit of the times they represent. For in a sense even Shakespeare was "of an age," as well as "for all time." \* So far as we can guess from his work, he seems to have shared the orthodox politics of the Tudor times, distrusting the actions of the populace, and stanch in his support of the power of the king. In the true spirit of the Renaissance, Shakespeare's work is taken up chiefly with humanity

\* "He was not of an age, but for all time." From Ben Jonson's poem "To the Memory of Shakespeare."

in this world, rather than with its relations to any other ; his dramas are alive with the crowding interests and activities which came with the Revival of Learning. But the England in which Milton lived and worked was stirred by far different emotions ; its finest spirits were inspired by far different ideals. Milton interprets and expresses the England of Puritanism, as Shakespeare does the England of Elizabeth, and to understand the difference in the spirit of their poetry, we must turn to history and grasp the broad distinction between the times they respectively represent.

At first sight the change from the England of Shakespeare to that of Milton seems an abrupt one. In point of actual time the two poets are close together, for at the death of Shakespeare Milton was eight years old. But **Elizabethan and Puritan England.** little more than half a century lies between that England in which loyalty to queen and country so triumphed over religious differences that Romanist and Protestant fought the Armada side by side, and that England which hurried Charles I. to the scaffold, or in which Cromwell declared : " If I met the king in battle I would shoot him as soon as any other man." Yet in reality this change of the nation's mood was not hasty or unaccountable, but the natural result of a long and steady development.

We spoke of the Renaissance as the re-birth of the religious as well as of the intellectual life of Europe, and we saw that while in Italy the new life of the mind took form in what we call the Revival of Learning, in Germany the new life of the spirit

had its outcome in that religious awakening we call the Reformation. If in Italy the Renaissance meant freedom of thought, in Germany it meant freedom of conscience. The Revival of Learning and the Reformation entered into England almost side by side. If the enthusiasm for the new learning, the color of luxury, and the "enchantments of the Circes," had entered England from Italy, something also of the awakening of conscience and the protest against Romanism had come from Germany, to find a deep response in the kindred spirit of Teutonic England.

In our study of the Elizabethan period we have followed the first of these two influences. Let us look a moment at the second. Almost from the first, the tone of the new learning in England had been colored by the inherently religious temper of the English character. The knowledge of Greek which John Colet gained in semi-pagan Italy he applied to the study of the New Testament. Educational reformer as he was, he had the image of the child Christ placed over the headmaster's desk in St. Paul's Grammar School, with the inscription, "Hear ye Him.\*" Just as the introduction of the study of Greek at Oxford changed the horizon of the English mind, so the introduction of Tyndale's translation of the Bible was an incalculable spiritual force. "If God spare my life," Tyndale had said to a learned opponent, "ere many years I will cause that the boy that driveth the plow shall know

\*For account of Colet, read *Green's History of the English People*, vol. ii. p. 79, etc.

more of the Scriptures than thou dost." And year after year the inestimable influence of an ever-widening knowledge of the Bible was at work in thousands of English households.

Beginning among the upper stratum of society, the new learning had worked downward until it touched the people. But the changes wrought by direct contact with the English Bible, **The English Bible.** if slower, were even more vital and more extended. The Bible became the literature of the people, telling the poorest and plainest of the essential things of life in words which all could understand. If we find a typical picture in the crowd of London shopkeepers and prentices crowding the pit of the "Fortune" or the "Globe," we find one no less typical in the eager throngs gathered about the reader of the Bible in the nave of St. Paul's. "The disclosure of the stores of Greek literature had wrought the revolution of the Renaissance. The disclosure of the older mass of Hebrew literature wrought the revolution of the Reformation."\*

With this new idea of religious liberty, the idea of political liberty became closely associated. Stimulated and emancipated by greater intellectual and religious freedom of inquiry, **Religious and political liberty closely connected.** men began to scrutinize and discuss the whole theory of government. They grew restless under the arbitrary rule of the early Stuarts as their minds rose to the conception of their supreme obligation to a higher law; to a Power

\* Green's *History of the English People*, vol. iii. p. 11. The whole passage from pp. 9 to 13 may be read in class.

above the will of the king in the state, above the will of man in the kingdom of God. In the early part of the seventeenth century many things combined to call out and develop these new feelings. The middle classes had advanced greatly during Elizabeth's reign, in prosperity, influence, and intelligence; the danger from Spain was at an end, and men were free to give themselves up to matters at home. But the natural growth of the nation toward a greater political and religious freedom was met by petulant opposition. Elizabeth had been wise enough to know when and how to yield to the will of her Parliament and people, but it was characteristic of the Stuarts to take a wrong position and hold to it with an obstinate and reckless tenacity. The unkingly James (1603–1625) flaunted what he considered the “Divine Right” of his kingship in the face of an exasperated England. In the early years of the following reign (Charles I., 1625–1649), the growing Puritan sentiment was outraged by brutal persecution, the rising spirit of liberty insulted by flagrant violations of the long established and sacred political rights of Englishmen. Thus the England that rose up in protest against the severities of Archbishop Laud and the tyranny and duplicity of Charles, was on fire with other interests and other aspirations than that of Elizabeth; its energies were centered upon two great issues—politics and religion. In the one, it was determined to “vindicate its ancient liberties”; in the other, it “reasoned of righteousness and judgment to come.” Among its great leaders in politics

**Arbitrary  
rule of the  
early Stuarts.**



were Eliot, Hampden, Pym, and Cromwell ; in literature it spoke in the strong, simple, biblical prose of John Bunyan, a poor tinker; its poet was John Milton.

#### LATER ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

But while the new ways of looking at the deepest questions of life, which for years had been agitating the Puritan element in England, were thus coming to the surface in history and in literature, during the early part of the seventeenth century many continued to write in the general manner and spirit of the Elizabethans. This later Elizabethan literature lies outside our present plan of study, but it cannot be passed over without a few words.

The group of dramatists immediately preceding Shakespeare (see p. 129) had been followed by a number of men of genius who had the advantage of writing at a time when Later Elizabethan drama. the theater was a more recognized institution, and the general form of the drama had been fixed by successful experiment. Ben Jonson, whose first play, *Every Man in his Humor*, was brought out about 1596-1598, is usually considered as the greatest of Shakespeare's fellow-playwrights ; he doggedly fought his way to the front in the face of many obstacles, wrote many plays and masks, and after Shakespeare's death became the most prominent man of letters in England. Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ford, Chapman, Dekker, and Marston are a few of the most famous of these dramatists, and we see the influence of Italy in such plays as Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, and *Vittoria Corombona*, or

in the intense and passionate tragedies of Cyril Tourneur. Nevertheless, the decline of the Elizabethan drama had begun before Shakespeare's death.

Ben Jonson, Unlike Shakespeare, Ben Jonson was and decline not content to "hold, as 'twere, the of drama. mirror up to nature,"\* and show the world of men and women as it actually existed: he thought that the poet's business was to point a moral and to reform society. He ridiculed the abuses and fashionable follies of the time by making the persons of his dramas represent the peculiar hobbies or "humors" of men, but in doing this his drama lost in faithfulness to life through a method which inclined him to make the mere caricature of what we call a "fad" take the place of a character. The method of Jonson, great as he was, was thus a distinct falling off from that of Shakespeare.

Apart from this, the decline of the drama is closely associated with the increase of the Puritans, among whom were its bitterest opponents. In Puritan hostility to the stage. the early seventeenth century this hostility to the stage increased; unsuccessful attempts were made (1619-1631-1633) to suppress Blackfriars Theater, and the representation of plays on Sunday was prohibited. Many of the more respectable people stayed away from the theaters altogether, while those who came demanded plays of a more and more depraved character. Finally, about the beginning of the Civil War (1642) the theaters were closed altogether, and the drama almost ceased until the Restoration (1660).

\* *Hamlet*, act iii. scene 2.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LYRISTS

Most of the poetry of the early seventeenth century follows the general lines laid down by the Elizabethans, but with an obvious loss of creative power, and with less freshness, vigor, and depth. The first enthusiasm awakened by the coming of the new learning was largely spent, and men's energies were beginning to go out in new directions. Deprived of the strong inner impulse which sustained the earlier writers, poetry became more light, trifling, and affected. Dr. John Donne (1573-1631), a learned man and a genuine poet, delighted in a style of poetry often so far-fetched and fantastic as to deprive it of much of its value in the eyes of later readers, and there arose a group of graceful if somewhat artificial lyric poets who contented themselves with writing slight and pretty songs. Among these are Richard Lovelace (1618-1658), Thomas Carew (1598-1639?), and Sir John Suckling (1609-1641). Each of these men holds an assured though minor place in literature by virtue of comparatively few poems; yet each has contributed to it at least one lyric which has become a classic. The same fantastic spirit which we have noted in Donne runs through much of their work, and it is also distinctly traceable in that of a group of poets in other respects widely separated. These are the religious poets, George Herbert (1593-1633), Richard Crashaw (1613-1650?), Henry Vaughan (1622-1695?), and Francis Quarles (1592-1644). Robert Herrick (1591-1674), rises above these by his greater simplicity and directness, and in the finer

Robert Her-  
rick.

quality of his lyrical gift. His limpid and altogether charming verse is troubled by no depth of thought or storm of passion. The most of his verse reflects the pagan spirit of those who lie at ease in the warm sunshine ; content to enjoy, they sigh that life is but a day, and lament as the lengthening shadow draws near. The closing verse of his poem, *Corinna's going a-Maying*, is a good example of his familiar mood : the inevitable chill of regret creeps into the sunshiny lyric of May day, and his laughter ends in a sigh :

“ Come, let us go, while we are in our prime !  
 And take the harmless folly of the time !  
     We shall grow old apace, and die  
     Before we know our liberty.  
     Our life is short ; and our days run  
     As fast away as does the sun :  
 And as a vapor, or a drop of rain  
 Once lost, can ne’er be found again :  
     So when you or I are made  
     A fable, song, or fleeting shade ;  
     All love, all liking, all delight  
     Lies drowned with us in endless night.  
 Then while time serves, and we are but decaying.  
 Come, my Corinna ! come, let’s go a-Maying.”

There is a captivating naturalness and freshness in Herrick’s note ; the rural England of his time is green forever in his verse, the hedgerows are abloom, the Maypoles gay with garlands. He sings

“ Of brooks, of blossoms, buds and bowers.  
 Of April, May, and June, and July flowers.”\*

\* *Hesperides*.

In Herrick's time England was racked with civil war, but neither the strife of religions nor the tumults in the state seem to shatter his Arcadia ; while king and Parliament are in deadly grapple, Herrick sings his dainty love-songs to Julia and Anthea, and "babbles of green fields."

In the midst of such poetry as this, slight, charming, or fantastic, there rises the mighty voice of Milton. In *Lycidas*, which may be said to conclude the poems of his earlier Herrick and Milton. period, Milton, too, asks the pagan question, "Seeing that life is short, is it not better to enjoy?" but only to meet it with triumphant denial. This famous passage becomes of especial interest when we think that it was probably written with such poets as Carew and Herrick in mind ; when we recognize in it the high seriousness and religious faith of Puritanism, squarely confronting the nation's lighter mood.

"Alas ! what boots it with uncessant care  
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,  
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse ?  
Were it not better done, as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair ?  
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
(That last infirmity of noble mind),  
To scorn delights and live laborious days ;  
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,  
And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'  
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears ;



'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
 Nor in the glistening foil  
 Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies,  
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes  
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;  
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed;  
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.' \*\*

## JOHN MILTON

Shakespeare, the poet of man, was born in rural England; John Milton, into whose remote and lofty verse humanity enters so little, was born in Bread Street in the heart of London, December 9, 1608.

His early years were passed in a sober and orderly Puritan household among influences of refinement and culture. His father, John Milton, **Boyhood at London, 1608-1624.** was a scrivener, an occupation somewhat corresponding to the modern conveyancer, but he was also well known as a musical composer. The younger Milton's faculty for music had thus an opportunity for early development; a fact of especial interest when we recall the distinctively musical character of his verse.

Milton was early destined "for the study of humane letters," and given every educational advantage. He had private instruction, and about 1620 was sent to the famous Grammar School of St. Paul.† Here, to use his own expression, he worked "with eagerness," laying the foundation of his future blindness by intense application. He began to experiment in poetry, and we have paraphrases of two of the Psalms made by him at this time.

\* *Lycidas*, ll. 64 to 85.

† See *supra*, p. 101.

In 1624 Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where he continued to work with the same steady and regulated enthusiasm. His youth was spotless and high-minded, Cambridge,  
1624-1632. with perhaps a touch of that austerity which deepened as he grew older. His face had an exquisitely refined and thoughtful beauty ; his soft light brown hair fell to his shoulders after the cavalier fashion ; his figure was well-knit but slender ; his complexion, "exceeding fair." From his somewhat delicate beauty, and from his blameless life, he gained the college nickname of "the Lady." The year after he entered college he wrote his first original poem, *On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough*, and to this period also belong the resonant *Hymn to the Nativity* and other short pieces.

After leaving Cambridge Milton spent nearly six years at his father's country house at Horton, a village near Windsor, and about seventeen miles from London. Here he lived with Horton,  
1632-1638. books and nature, studying the classics and physical science, and leaving his studious quiet only for an occasional trip to town to learn something new in music or in mathematics.

Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, composed at this time, reflect both the young poet and his surroundings. Rustic life and superstitions are there blended with idyllic pictures of the Horton landscape. In *L'Allegro* we hear the plowman whistle at his furrow, the milkmaid sing at her work ; we see the "L'Allegro"  
and "Il Penseroso."

“ Meadows trim, with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide,”

or mark the neighboring towers of Windsor

“ Bosomed high in tufted trees.”

In both poems we detect Milton himself, a refined and serious nature, exquisitely responsive to whatever is best in life, with a quick and by no means narrow appreciation of things beautiful. The poems suggest to us a youthful Milton dreaming of gorgeous and visionary splendors in the long summer twilights, delighting in the plays of Jonson and Shakespeare, and spending lonely midnights in the loftiest speculations of philosophy; a Milton whose beauty-loving and religious nature was moved by the solemn ritual of the Church of England under the “high embowed roof” of a cathedral. In these poems, especially *L'Allegro*, Milton is very close to the Elizabethans. In their tinge of romance they remind us of Spenser, who, according to Masson, was Milton's poetical master, while in their lyrical movement they strikingly resemble certain songs of Fletcher in his pastoral drama, *The Faithful Shepherdess*.<sup>\*</sup> But *Comus* (1634), Milton's

“*Comus*.” next work, shows the decided growth of a new and distinctly Puritan spirit. In its form indeed, *Comus* belongs to the earlier age. It is a mask—one of those gorgeous dramatic spectacles which Renaissance England had learned from Italy,

<sup>\*</sup> See the beautiful lyric, “Shepherds All and Maidens Fair,” in act ii. scene 1, and “Song of the River God,” in act iv. scene 1, of this play.

the favorite entertainment at the festivals of the rich, with which Ben Jonson so often delighted the court of James. *Comus* has music and dancing, and it affords the requisite opportunity for scenic effects, yet there breathes through it the growing strain of moral earnestness. It shows us how purity and innocence can thread the darkest and most tangled ways of earth, unharmed and invincible, through the inherent might of goodness. In noble and memorable words Milton declares that if we once lose faith in this essential power of righteousness, and in the ultimate triumph of good over evil which that power is destined to secure, the very foundations of the universe give way.

“ . . . Against the threats  
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power  
Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm :  
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,  
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled :  
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm  
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.  
But evil on itself shall back recoil,  
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,  
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,  
It shall be in eternal restless change  
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,  
The pillared firmament is rottenness,  
And earth's base built on stubble.” \*

We see the powers of Heaven descend to protect beleaguered innocence, and in the parting words of the attendant spirit, we find both the practical lesson of the mask and the guiding principle of Milton :

\* *Comus*.

“Mortals, that would follow me,  
 Love Virtue ; she alone is free.  
 She can teach ye how to climb  
 Higher than the sphery chime ;  
 Or, if Virtue feeble were,  
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.” \*

In his next poem, the pastoral elegy of *Lycidas* (1637), the space between Milton and the Elizabethans continues to widen. From the “*Lycidas*,” enthusiasm for virtue, he passes to an outburst of wrath and denunciation against those in the Church whom he considered the faithless shepherds of the flock.

“The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,”

but the hour of retribution is at hand ; already the

“two-handed engine at the door,  
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.” †

The first thirty years of Milton's life had thus been lived almost wholly “in the still air of delightful studies.” ‡ Industrious and select reading was part of his systematic preparation for the life work he set himself. Up to this time he wrote little, although that little was enough to give him an honorable place among the poets of England ; but already he was full of great designs, writing in 1637, “I am pluming my wings

Travels,  
 1638-1639.

\* *Comus*.

† *Lycidas*. For full analysis of this passage see *Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies*.

‡ Milton, *The Reason of Church Government*, Int., book ii.



for a flight." To all he had learned from books he now added the widening influences of travel.

Leaving England in April, 1638, he passed through Paris to Italy, meeting many learned and famous men, among the rest the old astronomer Galileo, to whom he refers in the early part of *Paradise Lost*.

Meanwhile the civil troubles in England seemed gathering to a crisis, and Milton resolved to shorten his trip, because, as he wrote, "I considered it base that while my fellow-countrymen were fighting at home for liberty, I should be traveling abroad for intellectual culture."

We learn from the *Epitaphium Damonis*, a beautiful Latin elegy written at this time (1639), that Milton was already planning a great epic poem, but this project was to be rudely interrupted. England was on the brink of civil war, and after long years of preparation Milton put aside his cherished ambitions and pursuits, and freely gave up his life and genius to the service of his country. Except for occasional sonnets, the greatest poet in England forced himself to write prose for more than twenty years. Most of this prose was written in the heat of "hoarse disputes," and is often marred by the bitterness and personal abuse which marked the controversies of that troubled time; but this is redeemed in many places by earnestness and a noble eloquence.

Prominent among the works of this prose period are the *Tractate on Education* (1644), and the splendid *Areopagitica*, a burning plea for the liberty of the press, of which it has been said: "Its defense of

Return to  
England, and  
prose works,  
1639-1660.

books, and the freedom of books, will last as long as there are writers and readers of books." \*

Meanwhile (1643), Milton had taken a hasty and unfortunate step in marrying Mary Powell, a young girl of less than half his age, of Royalist family, who proved unsuited to him in disposition and education. After the execution of Charles I. (1649) Milton ranged himself on the side of those who had taken this tremendous step, in a pamphlet on *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, and a month after its publication was made the Latin, or foreign, Secretary to the newly established Commonwealth. His pen continued to be busy for the state, until in 1652 his eyes failed him through over-use, and he was stricken with total blindness. In this year his wife died, leaving him with three little girls. In 1656 he married Katherine Woodcock, who lived but little more than a year, and to whom he paid a touching tribute in one of his sonnets. †

In these later years of Milton's life, during which he suffered blindness, sorrow, and broken health, the cause for which he had sacrificed so much **The later poetic period. 1660-1674.** was lost, and England brought again under the rule of a Stuart king. Milton had been so vehement an advocate of the Parliament that we wonder at his escape ; but, from whatever reason, he was not excepted from the general pardon put forth by Charles II. after his return (August 29,

\* *Milton*, Rev. Stopford Brooke, p. 45, Classical Writers Series.

† "Methought I saw my late espoused Saint  
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave," etc.

1660). In the riotous years that followed, when England, casting off decency and restraint, plunged into "the mad orgy of the Restoration," Milton entered in earnest upon the composition of *Paradise Lost*, singing with voice

" unchanged  
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days ;  
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,  
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,  
And solitude." \*

In his little house in Bunhill Fields, near the London in which the pleasure-loving king jested at faith and honor, and held his shameless court amid

". . . The barbarous dissonance  
Of Bacchus and his revelers," . . . †

the old poet lived his life of high contemplation and undaunted labor. At no time does Milton seem to us more worthy of himself ; he is so heroic that we hardly dare to pity him. But wherever the fault lay, his daughters, whose privilege it should have been to minister to him, greatly increased his burdens. They are said to have sold his books without his knowledge, and two of them counseled his maidservant to "cheat him in his marketings."

When we reflect that the oldest daughter was but fourteen at the Restoration, and that the education of all had been neglected, we are inclined to judge less hardly, but we can scarcely wonder that Milton should have sought some means of relief from these

\* *Paradise Lost*, bk. vii.

† *Ibid.*

intolerable discomforts. This he happily found through his marriage with Elizabeth Minshull in 1663. Yet even when matters were at the worst, Milton seems to have borne them with a beautiful fortitude, "having a certain serenity of mind not condescending to little things." His one faithful daughter, Deborah, speaks of his cheerfulness under his sufferings from the gout, and describes him as "the soul of conversation." In the spirit of his sonnet "On His Blindness," he was content to "only stand and wait," sending up the prayer out of his darkness,

" So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,  
Shine inward." \*

The words of one who visited him at this time help to bring Milton before us, dressed neatly in black, and seated in a large armchair in a room with dark green hangings, his soft hair still falling over his shoulders, his sightless eyes still beautiful and clear.

*Paradise Lost* was published in 1667, to be followed in 1671 by *Paradise Regained*. With the latter poem appeared the noble drama of *Samson Agonistes* (or the Wrestler), and with it Milton's work was ended. He died on November 8, 1674, so quietly that those with him knew not when he passed away.

" Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame ; nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in a death so noble." †

\* *Paradise Lost*, bk. iii.

† *Samson Agonistes*, l. 1721.

We are stimulated and thrilled by the thought of Milton's life, as at the sight of some noble and heroic action. Obviously it is not free from our common human shortcomings, but **Milton's ideal of life.** in its whole ideal and in its large results, we feel that it moves habitually on the higher levels, and is animated by no vulgar or ordinary aims. It is much that as a great poet Milton loved beauty, that as a great scholar he sought after truth. It is more that, above the scholar's devotion to knowledge, Milton set the citizen's devotion to country, the patriot's passionate love of liberty; that above even the employment of his great poetic gift, he set the high resolve to make his life "a true poem," and to live

"As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye." \*

He has accordingly left us an example of solemn self-consecration to a lofty purpose, early undertaken, and steadfastly and consistently pursued. Milton's life was lived at high tension; he not only set an exacting standard for himself, he was also inclined to impose it upon others. He is so sublime that some of us are inclined to be a trifle ill at ease in his presence, or are apt to be repelled by a strain of severity far different from the sweet companionableness of Shakespeare. In Milton's stringent and austere ideal we miss at times the saving grace of Shakespeare's charity, or we are almost moved to exclaim with Sir Toby:

\* Sonnet "On his Arriving at the Age of Twenty-three."



“Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?”\*

In *Samson Agonistes*, when Delilah pleads before her husband that she has sinned through weakness, she is met by an uncompromising reply:

“ . . . if weakness may excuse,  
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,  
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it ?  
All wickedness is weakness, that plea, therefore,  
With God or man will gain thee no remission.”†

From such a rigorous insistence on condemnation in strict accord with the offense, our minds revert to Portia’s inspired plea for mercy, ‡ or to Isabella’s searching question :

“How would you be  
If He which is the top of judgment should  
But judge you as you are?” §

However we may appreciate these differences in the spirit of two great poets, we do Milton wrong if we fail to honor and reverence him for that in which he was supremely great. We must remember that this intense zeal for righteousness was a master passion in the highest spirits of Milton’s time, and that it is hard to combine zeal with tolerance. It is but natural that in the midst of the corrupt England of the Restoration, the almost solitary voice of the nation’s better

Paradise  
Lost.

\* *Twelfth Night*, act ii. scene 3.

† *Samson Agonistes*, l. 831.

‡ *V. supra*, p. 145.

§ *Measure for Measure*, act ii. scene 2.

self could not prophesy smooth things. This Puritan severity is especially marked in the three great poems of Milton's later life. As a young man he had chosen a purely romantic subject for his projected epic—the story of Arthur; his maturer interests led him to abandon this for a purely religious and doctrinal one; he treated of the fall of man and the origin of evil, that he might “justify the ways of God to men.” *Paradise Lost*, with its sequel, *Paradise Regained*, constitutes the one great contribution of the English genius to the epic poetry of the world. The style of these great works alone shows genius of the highest and rarest kind. By the incomparable dignity and majesty of the verse, with its prolonged and solemn music, and the curious involution of its slowly unfolding sentences, we are lifted out of the ordinary or the trivial, into the incalculable spaces of that region into which it is the poet's object to transport us. In *Paradise Lost*, caught in the tremendous sweep of Milton's imagination, we see our whole universe, with its circling sun and planets hanging suspended in the black abyss of chaos,

“In bigness like a star.”

Heaven, “the deep tract of Hell,” and that illimitable and chaotic region which lies between, make up the vast Miltonic background, where legions of rebellious angels strive with God, and wherein is enacted the mysterious drama, not of men, but of the race of Man.

The attitude of Shakespeare toward that unseen

and mysterious region which lies beyond the limits of our human experience, was that of the new learning. He places us in the midst of our familiar world, and there we only catch at times the half-intelligible whisper of voices coming out of those blank surrounding spaces which no man can enter. Hamlet, slipping out of this little earthly circle of noise and light, can but whisper on the brink of the great blackness of darkness, that

“ The rest is silence.”

But Milton, with the new daring of Puritanism, took for his province that “undiscovered country” beyond the walls of this goodly prison, as Shakespeare, through Hamlet, called the world. At the beginning of his great epic he invokes “The Heavenly Muse,”

“ That on the secret top  
Of Oreb or of Sinai, didst inspire,  
That Shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,  
In the beginning how the heaven and earth  
Rose out of chaos.” \*

He looks to the Hill of Sion,

“ And Siloa’s brook that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God.” \*

rather than to Parnassus, and by Celestial guidance intends to soar “above the Aonian mount,” and to pursue

“ Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.” \*

\* *Paradise Lost*, bk. i.

## STUDY LIST

## JOHN MILTON

1. *L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO*. Palgrave points out in his preface to the *Golden Treasury* that these are the earliest purely descriptive lyrics in the language. Rev. Stopford Brooke speaks of them as describing "the bright and the thoughtful aspects of Nature." This is true, but we should rather regard them as showing us Nature as she appears to the cheerful and to the pensive or meditative man. The poems are not objective or impersonal descriptions of scenery. In each we have not merely an aspect of Nature, but the mood of an observer. Nature is seen through the medium of this mood. (V. Coleridge's *Dejection, An Ode*, and also note on the same, p. 281. Cf. Ruskin on "The Pathetic Fallacy," in *Modern Painters*.) Contrast these companion poems, and notice close parallelism. The *Allegro*, which begins with the early morning and ends at night, is paralleled thought by thought, scene by scene, with the *Penseroso*, which begins with the late evening and ends toward the noon of the next day. But the *Penseroso* closes with the wish—which, not paralleled in the *Allegro*, makes us know that Milton preferred the pensive to the mirthful temper—that he may live on into old age and contemplative life,

"Till old experience do attain,  
To something like prophetic strain."

Cf. Spenser for general poetic tone; also, especially for metrical effect, songs in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*. Note description of rustic life, superstitions, etc., and explain classical allusions. Consult Stopford A. Brooke's *Milton*, Classical Writers Series, pp. 18-19; Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, pp. 186-190; Notes in Masson's edition of *Milton* and in Hale's *Longer English Poems*.

2. *LYCIDAS*. This poem is pastoral in form, "with its introduction and its epilogue, and between them the monody of the Shepherd who has lost his friend (S. A. Brooke's *Milton*, p. 26). It is also an elegy or poem of mourning for

the dead. Look up the nature of the pastoral and the elegy, and their history in English and in classical literature. Find derivation and exact meaning of *elegy*. "Elegiac poems may be distinguished as objective or subjective, according as their tenor and general aim may be either simply to occupy themselves with the fortunes, character, and acts of the departed, or to found a train of musings having reference to self, or at least strongly colored by the writer's personality, upon the fact of bereavement" (Arnold's *English Literature*, pp. 445-446). Give examples of elegies in each of these classes. To which group does *Lycidas* belong? Who was the subject of *Lycidas*? When and under what circumstances was it written? Does the poem seem to you to express a deep and genuine grief, or to be merely formal and conventional in tone? If the latter, do you consider this a fault? Can you name any elegy which seems to you to express a more genuine personal grief? *Of* Shelley's *Adonais*, and latter part of Theocritus' first ode, *Thyrsis*. Note description of Welsh coast under classic names. See notes in Masson's edition of Milton, and Hale's *Longer English Poems*; Brooke's *Milton*, pp. 25-27; Garnett's *Milton*, p. 48 *et seq.*; Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*; and for the elegy, Arnold's *History of English Literature*, p. 445 *et seq.*

3. PARADISE LOST, bks. i.-iii. Look up, as preliminary study, history and nature of the epic; its place in the development of poetry as an art, etc., etc. Note Theodore Watts' division of this form of poetry into epics of *growth* and epics of *art*; see article on "Poetry" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*. For the epic in general, *v.* Gummere's *Handbook of Poetry for Students of English Verse*, a most convenient book for general use. For interesting instance of a survival of the "epic of growth" in modern times, *v.* Introduction to Hapgood's *Epic Songs of Russia*. For *Paradise Lost*, see general reference given in Section 5.

4. SAMSON AGONISTES has been well edited by J. Churton Collins, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

5. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. *Lives*: Garnett's, in Great Writers Series; Pattison's, in English Men of Letters Series; Milton, in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*; Masson's *Three Devils*,



*Luther's, Milton's, Goethe's, and other Essays.* The essay in same volume on the "Youth of Milton" contains interesting comparison between Milton and Shakespeare. Essay on "Milton" in Seeley's *Lectures and Essays*; Stopford Brooke's *Milton*, in Student's Literary Series. Macaulay's Essay on *Milton*; M. Arnold's Essay on *Milton*.

*History*: S. R. Gardiner's series of histories cover this period. Masson's *Life and Times of Milton*; Macaulay's *History of England, from accession of James II.*



## PART III

### THE FRENCH INFLUENCE. 1660-cir. 1750

#### THE ENGLAND OF THE RESTORATION

THE Restoration is one of the great landmarks in the history of England. It means more than a change in government; it means the <sup>Changes at</sup> beginning of a new England, in life, in <sup>the Restoration.</sup> thought, and in literature. On every side we find outward signs of the nation's different mood. The theaters were reopened, and frivolous crowds applauded a new kind of drama, light, witty, and immoral. The Maypoles were set up again, bear-baiting revived, the Puritan Sabbath disregarded. The king had come to enjoy his own again, and thousands who had grown restive under Puritanic restraints flung aside all decency to recklessly enjoy it with him. Those whom the Puritan had overthrown were again uppermost, and they knew no moderation in the hour of their triumph. The cause and faith of Cromwell and of Milton were loaded with insult and contempt, and the snuffling Puritan was baited and ridiculed, as in the clever but vulgar doggerel of Butler's *Hudibras*. Had Cromwell lived, or had England remained a Puritan Commonwealth, the spirit which produced Wither, Milton, and Bunyan, might

have continued to enrich the literature ; but with the return of Charles II. we pass abruptly into a new literary period expressive of the nation's altered mood.

During the two centuries preceding the Restoration, the genius of England had been inspired and directed by Italy, but about the time of that event English writers began to turn for guidance to the brilliant and polished literature of France. This seems to have been due to a combination of causes. Throughout the whole of Europe the literary influence of Italy had sensibly declined, and at this time was being partially replaced by that of France. Politically, France had gained great ascendancy through the ability of her famous statesmen, Richelieu and Mazarin, and Louis XIV. (1643–1715), the most splendid living embodiment of despotic kingship, had gathered about his court a brilliant group of writers. Theological eloquence was represented by Bossuet and Fénelon, meditative prose by Pascal, tragedy by Corneille and Racine, and comedy by Molière, with the single exception of Shakespeare the greatest dramatist of the modern world. It was but natural that England, in common with other nations, should respond to the example of this rising literature ; but her readiness to learn from France seems to have been heightened by other causes. Charles II. had brought with him from his exile on the Continent a fondness for things French, and, in particular, a liking for the French style of tragedy. France was powerful in the very heart of Charles' court, and his reign shows us the shameful

**The French influence.**

spectacle of an English king seeking to undermine English liberty by the aid of a French king's gold.

Doubtless the French tastes of the king were not without their effect on literature ; but a still more important reason for the English following of French models remains to be noticed. One great characteristic of the French literature of this period was the importance it attached to literary form, that is, to the finish, elegance, and correctness with which the thought was expressed. Recent efforts had been made to improve and purify the language, and from this task the French scholars turned their attention to the rules of literary composition. Boileau became the literary lawgiver of the day by his *Art of Poetry* (1673), in which he urged writers to avoid the brilliant extravagances of the Italians, and strive to write with exactness and "good sense." Now this doctrine met with especial favor, because it exactly suited the general trend and tendency of the times. Throughout Europe the creative impulse of the Renaissance was dying. No longer sustained by that overmastering desire to create, which, by its very truth and intensity, leads genius to an artistic expression, men came to rely more on such external guidance as could be had from the maxims of composition. England shared in this prevailing tendency, and naturally took for her pattern the great French exponents of the congenial doctrine.

Edmund Waller (1605-1687) was one of the earliest of these followers of the French, and was for some time looked up to as the great refiner of language



and versification ; but the real head of the *Critical School*, as this group of writers is called, was John Dryden (1631-1700), a man of logical and masculine intellect, and of finished literary skill.

**John Dryden.** Dryden rises above the smaller men of his day by the weight of sheer intellectual force. From the Restoration to the close of the century he dominated English letters, "the greatest man of a little age." He represents the new critical spirit and the desire for moderation and correctness of literary form. "Nothing," he declared, "is truly sublime that is not just and proper ;" and he brought to his work a cold and critical intellect, and the most exacting and conscientious care. In his adaptation of an English translation of Boileau's *Art of Poetry*, he announces his own principles of composition—principles which distinguish the writers of his school :

"Gently make haste, of labor not afraid ;  
A hundred times consider what you've said ;  
Polish, repolish, every color lay,  
And sometimes add, but oftener take away." \*

Dryden's careful study of literature as an art is further shown by his prose criticisms. It was his custom to preface his plays and poems with a discussion, explaining or defending the methods upon which the work had been composed ; and his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry* (1667), in which he advocates the use of rhyme in serious plays, holds an assured place in the history of English criticism.

**Dryden as critic.**

\* *The Art of Poetry*, canto i. l. 171.

Immense intellectual force, and an ability to argue in verse, two of the most obvious elements of Dryden's genius, lift his satires and didactic poems into a foremost place in the literature. His *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), the greatest political satire of the language, was written in the interests of the court party, and contains a masterly attack upon the Earl of Shaftesbury, who was then on trial for high treason. The portrayal of Shaftesbury, under the name of Achitophel, is justly famous, and is a good illustration of Dryden's peculiar power.

Dryden as  
satirist.

“ Of these the false Achitophel was first ;  
 A name to all succeeding ages curst :  
 For close designs and crooked counsels fit ;  
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit ;  
 Restless, unfixed in principles and place ;  
 In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace ;  
 A fiery soul, which, working out its way,  
 Fretted the pygmy body to decay,  
 And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.

A daring pilot in extremity ;  
 Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high  
 He sought the storms ; but for a calm unfit,  
 Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.  
 Great wits are sure to madness near allied,  
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide ;  
 Else why should he, with wealth and honor blest,  
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest ?  
 Punish a body which he could not please ;  
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease ?  
 And all to leave what with his toil he won,  
 To that unfeather'd two-legged thing, a son.” \*

\* *Absalom and Achitophel*, pt. i. l. 150.

This masterpiece, which established its author's fame as a satirist, was followed by *The Medal* (1682), a second attack on Shaftesbury, and by *MacFlecknoe* (1682). In the latter, Shadwell, an otherwise obscure writer of the political faction opposite to that of Dryden, is immortalized by the stinging lash of the poet's ridicule. Flecknoe, who is about to abdicate from the throne of Dullness in favor of Shadwell, is made to declare :

" Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he,  
 Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.  
 The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,  
 But Shadwell never deviates into sense.  
 Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,  
 Strike through, and make a lucid interval ;  
 But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,  
 His rising fogs prevail upon the day." \*

The *Religio Laici* (1682), and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), are the great examples of Dryden's

Dryden's  
 power of  
 reasoning in  
 verse.

power of reasoning in verse. The first is a defense of the Church of England ; the second, written after the accession of the Roman Catholic James, and after

Dryden's change of faith, is an elaborate argument in behalf of the Church of Rome.

In lyric poetry Dryden is known by his majestic odes on *St. Cecilia's Day* and *Alexander's Feast*,

His lyrics.

and by the beautiful Memorial Ode on *Mistress Anne Killegrew*,† in which he

\* *MacFlecknoe*, l. 17.

† This beautiful Ode is given in Ward's *English Poets*.

speaks with touching humility of his own shortcomings.

Dryden is emphatically a representative English poet. By his life, character, and the spirit of his work, he belongs to the changed England which had risen out of the overthrow of Puritanism, and he embodies with unmistakable vigor and distinctness many of those marked features which were to characterize the nation and its literature for years to come. Outside the immediate circle of literature there are many indications of this change. The more coldly speculative and intellectual temper of the time is shown in the growth of a scientific spirit, shared even by the flippant king. The foundation of the Royal Society, in 1662, is one of the outcomes of this new science, while among the men busy in extending the knowledge of the physical world, towers the great figure of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727). It was an age of unimpassioned logic, of intellectual curiosity; its keen-edged intelligence occupied itself with theories of government and with the speculations of philosophy; its frigid good sense turned to biography and memoirs, to history, criticism, and letters. Thus, as we should expect, it was emphatically an age of prose. The relations of Dryden to such a time are close and obvious, and he plainly defines for us its mental temper. He had clearness, mental grasp, great ease and finish of style, and a hard-headed and masculine power; but we miss in him the glowing imagination of the Elizabethans, their mounting ardor of emotion, their love of nature and

Dryden and  
his time.

of beauty, their moods of exquisite tenderness. With Dryden, poetry became the coadjutor of politics, and the handmaid of religious controversy. We leave behind us the passion of *Lear*, or the rapt visions of *Paradise Lost*, to pass into a new world of fashion and wit, of logic and vituperation.

#### THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ESSAY

With new popular needs and a wider reading public came important changes in literature and in the position of the author. Before this, **Changed position of the author.** authorship, as a recognized calling, did not exist outside of the writers for the stage; but from about the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) we note the signs of change. During the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. the successful playwright reached a large public, but for the writer of books the circle of readers was comparatively small. Men did not attempt to make a living by authorship alone, and writing was accordingly an occasional occupation, an amusement or a mere graceful accomplishment. Hooker was a clergyman; Bacon unhappily gave to knowledge only such time as he could spare from law and politics; Raleigh and Sidney represent the large class of courtiers and gentlemen who wrote in the elegant leisure of brilliant and active lives, while Milton in his prose, with Prynne and Collier, are examples of those who used books as a means of controversy. That large reading public which in our own day enables the author to live solely by his pen did not then exist, and before the Civil War books were commonly published



through some powerful patron. But as wealth and leisure increased the general intelligence widened, and the author gradually gained the support of a large number of readers. Publishing became more profitable, and in the reign of Charles II. the number of publishing houses greatly increased. In Queen Anne's reign a close connection existed between literature and politics, and many authors were encouraged by the gift of government positions.\*

The author was still dependent on a powerful patron, but he was gradually struggling toward direct reliance on the public support. During Anne's reign the greater towns, and especially London, became more and more centers of social and intellectual activity. Coffee-houses were established in great numbers, and there the leading men in politics, literature, or fashion, habitually met to smoke and discuss the latest sensations over the novel luxury of coffee. Such friction made men's minds more alert, witty, and alive to the newest thing. Before 1715 there were nearly two thousand of these coffee-houses

\* "The splendid efflorescence of genius under Queen Anne was in a very great degree due to ministerial encouragement, which smoothed the path of many whose names and writings are familiar in countless households where the statesmen of that day are almost forgotten. Among those who obtained assistance from the government either in the form of pensions, appointments, or professional promotion, were Newton and Locke, Addison, Swift, Steele, Prior, Gay, Rowe, Congreve, Tickell, Parnell, and Philips, while a secret pension was offered to Pope, who was legally disqualified by his religion from receiving government favors."—*England in the Eighteenth Century*, by W. F. H. Lecky, vol. vi. p. 462.

alone, representing an immense variety of social classes and political opinions.\* With the spread of intelligence and the life of the club and coffee-house the rise of periodical literature is directly connected. Moreover, the liberty of the press, for which Milton

Rise of  
periodical  
literature.

strove, had been established since 1682, so that many things favored the rise of journalism. The first successful daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, was started in 1702, and eminent men began to find a new channel of expression in periodicals. In 1704 Defoe began his famous *Review*. This paper, published two or three times a week, was written entirely by himself and was not confined to news. His articles on policy, trade, etc., resemble finished essays, and his discussions of literature, manners, and morals in the monthly supplement called "Advice from the Scandalous Club," may be regarded as forerunners of the essays in *The Tatler* and *Spectator*. Yet *The Tatler* (1709), part newspaper and part magazine, was such an advance on all earlier attempts in this direction that it may be regarded as beginning a new order of periodical literature.†

*The Tatler* came out on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays; it was sold for a penny, and in addition to theater notices, advertisements, and current news,

\* Sidney's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 186. According to Halton, *New View of London*, vol. i. p. 30, there were nearly three thousand coffee-houses in England in 1708. See Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 616.

† A good account of this will be found in Courthope's *Life of Addison*, chap. i., in English Men of Letters Series.

it contained an essay which often treated lightly and good-humoredly some topic of the day. Such a paper was precisely what the new conditions of town life required. The floating talk of the clubs and coffee-houses was caught by the essayist and compressed into a brief, witty, and graceful literary form. In the place of ponderous sentences, moving heavily under their many-syllabled words and their cumbrous weight of learning, we have a new prose—deft, quick, sparkling, and neither too serious nor too profound. It is as though the age had abandoned the massive broadsword of an earlier time, to play at thrust and parry with the foils. The creators of this new periodical literature are Sir Richard Steele and his friend Joseph Addison.

Richard Steele (1672-1729) was a warm-hearted, lovable, and impulsive Irishman. Left fatherless before he was six years old, he gained admission to the Charterhouse school in

Steele.

London, through the influence of his uncle. Here he met Addison, his junior by two months, but greatly his senior in discretion; and the two schoolboys began a beautiful and almost lifelong friendship. Thackeray writes of this period of Steele's life: "I

am afraid no good report could be given by his masters and ushers of that thick-set, square-faced, black-eyed, soft-hearted

Thackeray  
on Steele.

little Irish boy. He was very idle. He was whipped deservedly a great number of times. Though he had very good parts of his own, he got other boys to do his lessons for him, and only took just as much trouble as should enable him to scuffle through his

exercises, and by good fortune escape the flogging block. One hundred and fifty years after, I have myself inspected, but only as an amateur, that instrument of righteous torture still existing, and in occasional use, in a secluded private apartment of the old Charterhouse school; and have no doubt it is the very counterpart, if not the ancient and interesting machine itself, at which poor Dick Steele submitted himself to the tormentors.

“Besides being very kind, lazy, and good-natured, this boy went invariably into debt with the tart-woman; ran out of bounds, and entered into pecuniary, or rather promissory, engagements with the neighboring lollipop venders and piemen—exhibited an early fondness for drinking mum and sack, and borrowed from all his comrades who had money to lend. I have no sort of authority for the statements here made of Steele’s early life; but if the child is father of the man, the father of young Steele of Merton, who left Oxford without taking a degree, and entered into the Life Guards—the father of Captain Steele of Lucas’ Fusiliers, who got his company through the patronage of my Lord Cutts—the father of Mr. Steele, the Commissioner of Stamps, the editor of *The Gazette*, *The Tatler*, and *Spectator*, the expelled member of Parliament, and the author of the *Tender Husband* and the *Conscious Lovers*; if man and boy resembled each other, Dick Steele, the schoolboy, must have been one of the most generous, good-for-nothing, amiable little creatures that ever conjugated the verb *tupto*, I beat, *tuptomai*, I am whipped, in any school in Great Britain.



"Almost every gentleman who does me the honor to hear me will remember that the very greatest character which he has seen in the course of his life, and the person to whom he has looked up with the greatest wonder and reverence, was the head boy of his school. . . I have seen great men in my time, but never such a great one as that head boy of my childhood ; we all thought he must be Prime Minister, and I was disappointed on meeting him in after life to find he was no more than six feet high.

"Dick Steele, the Charterhouse gownboy, contracted such an admiration in the years of his childhood, and retained it faithfully through his life. Through the school, and through the world, whithersoever his strange fortune led this erring, wayward, affectionate creature, Joseph Addison was always his head boy. Addison wrote his exercises. Addison did his best themes. He ran on Addison's messages ; fagged for him and blacked his shoes ; to be in Joe's company was Dick's greatest pleasure ; and he took a sermon or caning from his monitor with the most boundless reverence, acquiescence, and affection."\*

Leaving school, Steele went to Oxford, then entered the army, and ultimately rose to the rank of captain. He wrote a religious work, *The Christian Hero*, by which he complained he gained a reputation for piety which he found it difficult to live up to. To counteract this, and to "enliven his character," he wrote a comedy called *The Funeral* (1701). After producing several other plays Steele drifted into journalism, and after writing for a paper called

\* Thackeray's *English Humorists*, p. 200.



*The Gazette*, founded *The Tatler*. After a few weeks Addison became a contributor, but even before this the success of the paper was assured. Steele founds "The Tatler," 1709. *The Tatler* was discontinued in 1711, to make way for *The Spectator*, a joint enterprise of Addison and Steele. This ran until 1713, when it was succeeded by *The Guardian*, the last periodical for which the friends worked together. Steele was extravagant, good-natured, and fond of fine clothes. When he had money he spent it like a prince, and so did not have it long. He "outlived his wife, his income, his health, almost everything but his kind heart. That ceased to trouble him in 1729, when he died, worn out and almost forgotten by his contemporaries, in Wales, where he had the remnant of a property."\*

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) was more reserved, shy, and dignified than his rollicking friend Dick Steele. He was the son of a clergyman, Addison, and he had himself so much of the clerical gravity that a contemporary called him "a parson in a tie-wig." Like Steele he went to Oxford after leaving the Charterhouse school, but unlike Steele won a scholarship by some Latin verses. Like most of the authors of the time Addison was obliged to depend on patronage for a living. He was granted a pension in return for a laudatory poem on the Peace of Ryswick (1697). This he lost on the king's death (William III., 1702), and in the following year he returned to England from a Continental tour, with no certain prospects. Poetry came a second

\* Thackeray's *English Humorists*, p. 210.

time to his aid. He made a great hit by a poem called *The Campaign*, in which he celebrated the Duke of Marlborough's great victory at Blenheim, and was appointed to a government position. In 1713 he brought out his tragedy of *Cato*, which gave him a prodigious reputation, but, as we know, he had before this begun a work of even more permanent importance in his contributions to *The Tatler* and *Spectator*. As an essayist, Addison possessed a finer art than that of Steele, yet it was Steele who first suggested what Addison brought to perfection. This was the case with the famous character of Sir Roger de Coverley, the typical country gentleman of the time. Both Steele and Addison wrote as moralists, and in their work one sees that the reaction against the excesses of

Addison and  
Steele social  
reformers.

the Restoration had already begun. Their method as reformers is in keeping with the spirit of the time. They did not assail vice and folly with indignant eloquence, but, with delicate tact and unvarying good humor, they gently made them ridiculous. Addison regretted the emptiness and frivolity of the fashionable women, and set himself to bring a new interest into their lives. "There are none," he says, "to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world," \* and his direct appeal to the women readers is memorable in the history of the literature. Such papers as "The Fine Lady's Journal," "The Exercise of the Fan," "The Dissection of a Beau's Head," and of a "Coquette's Heart," with their minute observation and kindly satire of manners, are highly

\* *Spectator*, No 10. Read this entire paper.

representative. In "Ned Softly," Addison laughs at the literary doctrines of the day, showing us against a background of club life a "very pretty poet," who studies the approved maxims of poetry before sitting down to write, and who spends a whole hour in adapting the turn of the words in two lines.

Finally, we see in these early eighteenth century essays the forerunners of a new art. The faithful

The essay description of life and manners, the feeling for character and incident, show that the precursor of the novel. the essays have only to be thrown into

the form of a continued narrative to give us the modern novel. Before the eighteenth century was half over, Samuel Richardson and Joseph Fielding had continued in the novel that painting of contemporary life which the essayist had begun.

The character and work of Addison cannot be better summed up than in the famous tribute of Macaulay,

Macaulay on Addison. who calls him "the unsullied statesman ; the accomplished scholar, the great satirist who alone knew how to use ridicule

without abusing it ; who, without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform, and who reconciled wit and virtue after a long and painful separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy, and virtue by fanaticism."\*

#### ALEXANDER POPE.—1688-1744

Alexander Pope is the lawful successor to Dryden in the line of representative English poets. About

\* Macaulay, *Essay on Life and Writings of Addison*.

this extraordinary personage centers the literary and social activity of the Augustan Age, with its thin veneer of elegance and fashion, and its inherent coarseness and brutality; with its spiteful literary rivalries, its stratagems, its rancor, and its unmeasured slanders. The sturdy Dryden, robust enough to shoulder his way to the front by sheer force, had gone, and this fragile, deformed, and acutely nervous invalid reigned in his stead. The story of Pope's life is a painful one. He was weak and sickly from his infancy, and his life was "a long disease." He is said to have had a naturally sweet and gentle disposition, but he grew up to be petulant and embittered. His father, a rich and retired merchant, was a Roman Catholic, and the prejudice against persons of that faith was so strong at this time that Pope was prevented from attending the public schools. His education was consequently superficial and irregular. He had some instruction from a Roman Catholic priest, and afterward went to several small schools in succession, remaining a short time at each and learning but little. At one of these, the Roman Catholic seminary at Twyford, he began his career as a satirist by writing a lampoon on the master. When Pope was about twelve years old he was taken from school to live with his father at Binfield, a straggling village in Windsor Forest. Here he read much poetry, but in a rambling and desultory fashion. "I followed," he says, "everywhere as my fancy led me, and was like a boy gathering flowers in the field just as they fell in his way."\* He also wrote many verses

\* Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 193.



imitating the style of one or another of his favorite poets. He made metrical translations of the classics, and when between thirteen and fifteen years of age composed an epic poem of four thousand lines. By this early and incessant practice, Pope was acquiring that easy mastery of smooth and fluent versification which is characteristic of his mature work. His first published poem, *The Pastorals* (1709), represents

“The Pastorals.”

shepherds and shepherdesses in an imaginary Golden Age, conversing in flowing couplets, and with wit and refinement.

Even in that polite and artificial time, the unnaturalness of this did not pass unnoticed, and a writer in *The Guardian* held that the true pastoral should give a genuine picture of English country life.

Pope's next publication, the *Essay on Criticism* (published 1711), took London by storm. It is a didactic poem in which the established rules of composition are restated by Pope in terse, neat, and often clever, couplets. Poetry of this order was especially in accord with the reigning literary fashions, and in the *Essay* Pope was but following the lead of Boileau and of Dryden. Originality was neither possible nor desirable in a work which undertook to express the settled principles of criticism, yet the poem possesses a merit eminently characteristic of Pope—it is quotable. All through it we find couplets in which an idea, often commonplace enough, is packed into so terse, striking, and remarkable a form that it has become firmly imbedded in our ordinary thought and speech. Through his power to translate a current thought into an almost proverbial form,



Pope has probably enriched the language with more phrases than any writer save Shakespeare.

“ A little learning is a dangerous thing ;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.

“ To err is human, to forgive divine.

“ For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” \*

Such quotable bits as these are used by thousands who are entirely ignorant of their source.

Pope gave a brilliant proof of the versatility of his powers by *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), the religious poem of *The Messiah*, and *Windsor Forest*.

The first of these, *The Rape of the Lock*, is the most perfect poem of its kind in the literature. It owes its existence to a trifling incident, the theft of a lock of Mistress Arabella Fermor's hair, by Lord Petre, a gay young nobleman. The families of these two young people of fashion, as Pope puts it, “ took the matter too seriously,” † and an estrangement was the consequence. It was suggested to Pope by a friend that he should write a poem that should turn the whole thing into a jest, and restore the offended parties to good humor. The airy and glittering structure raised by Pope on this slight foundation is probably his most perfect work. The second edition appeared in 1714, with a dedication to Mistress Fermor, whose poetical counterpart we find in *Belinda*, the heroine of the poem.

\* All these quotations will be found in the *Essay on Criticism*.

† Spence's *Anecdotes*.

In it Pope constitutes himself the poet laureate of the trivial ; making the graceful nothings of fashion-

able society seem yet more trifling by  
**The poem.** affecting to treat them with the high seriousness of the heroic. With mock solemnity we follow the fortunes of Belinda through her little round of idleness and pleasure. We see her luxuriously slumbering on till noon, when her lapdog, Shock, awakens her. We are present at the toilet, and watch the progress of "the sacred rites of pride." And through the day, with its pleasure party up the Thames, its cards, its tea-drinking, and its tragic catastrophe of the severed curl, the mighty import of each incident is heightened by the unseen presence of supernatural beings, sylphs, who assist unknown at the parting of her hair, "preserve the powder" of her cheeks "from too rude a gale," or seek to guard from threatened dangers her lapdog or her locks. It has been said that Pope had a moral purpose in this solemn mockery ; that it is "a continuous satire on a tinsel existence"; and that the central motive of the whole is to be found in the speech of Clarissa with its concluding couplet :

" Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll !  
 Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."

It is more likely that the upholders of such a view have fallen into the error of the respective families of Lord Petre and Mistress Fermor, and "taken the matter too seriously." In *The Dunciad* Pope had a genuine personal grievance, and the darts of his satire are driven home and tipped with venom. But

in *The Rape of the Lock* there is neither personal wrath nor the slightest undercurrent of a moral indignation. The satire is playful, and the strokes as harmless as those in the contest of the lords and ladies, where the weapons are fans, lightning glances, and a pinch of snuff.

When we yield ourselves fully to the graceful charm of the poem, we feel that the intrusion of a serious moral purpose would overweight its airy and irresponsible levity. But apart from artistic considerations, it is not likely that Pope himself regarded the matter from the point of view of a social reformer. He is amused at the brilliant follies he describes ; he treats them with the flippancy and cleverness of the man of the world ; but he has neither the depth of feeling, nor the belief in the latent capacity of the men and women he satirizes, to really long to make them better. For women he exhibits a playful and invincible contempt. They are inherently, and, so far as appears, hopelessly vain and frivolous ; their hearts are "moving toy shops" ; their interests flirting, dressing, and shopping. However we may delight in the wit, sparkle, and fancy of *The Rape of the Lock*—and we can hardly admire them too much—we should realize that not only is the poem so nicely balanced that its pretended seriousness never slips into real earnestness, but that if we insist on taking it seriously, its implied moral is an exceedingly bad one. For it is not only the vain and trifling that are satirized. The poem is largely a burlesque of noble and beautiful ideals, and its wit chiefly consists in placing the sacred or the admirable

on a seeming equality with the trifling or the absurd. In this travesty of the sublime, the wrath of Achilles is replaced by the petulant vexation of Belinda. The world is reversed, and the unimportant is the only thing worthy of our concern. We are amused because all ordinary standards are changed, and we hear in the same breath of the state counsels and the tea-drinking of a Queen, of the deaths of husbands and of lapdogs, of the neglect of prayers, and the loss of a masquerade. In *Gulliver's Travels* we are entertained by the upsetting of our conceptions of physical relations, we see man become a pygmy among giants, a giant among pygmies ; in *The Rape of the Lock* we are entertained by a similar reversal of our moral and spiritual ideas, and in its tolerant cynicism the petty becomes great, the great petty.

From the moral aspect such wit, however entertaining, is not without its element of danger. It is a fact full of significance, when we stand back and look at the large movements in the history of English literature, that the most perfect and original poem which early eighteenth century England produced was the mockery of the heroic ; that in it the very froth of life should sparkle, crystallized forever into a fairy fretwork of exquisite tracery. Before this was Shakespeare's passion ; before this, too, the sightless eyes of Milton were raised to heaven, beholding the invisible. Yet it is a great thing that the race which gave life to *Hamlet* and to *Paradise Lost* should have been capable of creating also *The Rape of the Lock*.

In Windsor Forest the woodland about Binfield is

withdrawn from all danger of recognition, in accordance with the peculiar taste of the time.

Pan, Pomona, Flora, and Ceres, and <sup>"Windsor Forest."</sup> other classic deities are domesticated in

an English landscape, and Queen Anne compared with Diana. Vulgar realities are carefully avoided, as when the hunter, instead of taking aim, is made to

"Lift the tube and level with his eye." \*

The poem shows great ease and elegance, but what we admire in it is the artist's self-conscious and obtrusive skill. So elaborate is Pope's art here and elsewhere, that we are less occupied with what he says than with his practiced dexterity in saying it. Soon after the publication of this poem, Pope plunged into the midst of the fashionable society of the day. He frequented the theaters and clubhouses, loitered with the gay throngs at Bath, and was entertained at the country places of the nobility. After living for two years at Chiswick on the Thames (1716-1718), Pope leased a villa at Twickenham, about five miles farther up the river. <sup>Retires to Twickenham.</sup> Here he constructed what he called his

"grotto" and his gardener less elegantly styled "the underground passage," the walls of which "were finished with shells interspersed with pieces of looking glass in angular form." † He had, too, a temple of shells, and delighted in ornamental gardening. Here, indeed, was much of that "nature to advan-

\* *Windsor Forest*.

† See Pope's letters describing the grotto, given in Caruthers' *Life of Pope*, vol. i. pp. 171-177, Bohn's edition.



tage dressed " in which he believed. Here he reigned, a center of literature and fashion, entertaining among the rest the poet John Gay (1688-1732) and the great and terrible Dean Swift (1667-1745). Meanwhile he had worked industriously. His translation of the *Iliad* appeared in installments between 1715-1720, and that of the *Odyssey* was finished in 1725.

In 1728 Pope began a new stage of his career by *The Dunciad*, or epic of dunces, a satire on the general plan of MacFlecknoe against certain writers and booksellers of the day. In spite of that cleverness which Pope never loses, this poem is both pitiable and disgusting. Obscure and starving authors are dragged from their garrets and their straw to be overwhelmed with unsavory abuse,\* and while the poet employs every device that malignity can suggest, we miss the amazing vigor of Dryden's giant strokes.

Pope wrote other satires, but the most famous work of his later years is the *Essay on Man* (1732) a didactic poem largely based on the philosophy of his friend, Lord Bolingbroke.

Its purpose, like that of *Paradise Lost*, is "to vindicate the ways of God to man," but the subject, instead of being treated imaginatively, is cast in a purely didactic and argumentative mold. The sneering contempt for humanity, so frequent in early eighteenth century England, runs through the poem, and the attempt is made to justify or explain the ways of Providence by the belittling and rebuking of man. Man is but a link in an unknowable

\* See Thackeray's *English Humorists*, p. 267.

chain of being, and because he can form no idea of the purpose of the whole, he should not presume to condemn the working of a part.

"The proper study of mankind is man," not because of man's dignity and greatness, but because he should not aspire to grasp higher things or determine his true relations to them. Looking at "life's poor play," he finds one "single comfort,"

"Tho' man's a fool, yet God is wise."

The philosophy of the *Essay on Man* is shallow and antiquated, its argument often defective, yet the poem remains a living part of the literature by virtue of Pope's admirable and distinctive art. No proof of the enduring quality of this art could be more irrefutable than that the supreme power of saying trite things aptly, gracefully, and concisely, has successfully kept the *Essay on Man* on the surface, while other didactic poems of the time have long since sunk under the weight of prosy moralizing.

About Pope's life but little more need be said. During his later years his feeble frame was shaken by illness, and his hours embittered by the fierce retaliation which *The Dunciad* Later years. naturally provoked. He died quietly in his villa May 30, 1744, and was buried in the Twickenham church near the monument he had erected to his parents.

It is almost impossible for readers and critics of this generation to be fair to Pope either as a poet or as a man. He is the spokesman of a Pope and his dead time, separated from ours by the time. most fundamental differences in its ideals of liter-

ature and of life. So absolutely is he bound up with this time that we must try to enter it in imagination if we would understand and sympathize with its typical poet. The literary taste of the age was satisfied with correctness, grace, and finish; Pope's poetry complied with these conditions, and is smooth, polished, concise, and lucid. Besides this, Pope has given one poem to the literature as unparalleled of its kind as *Paradise Lost* or *Hamlet*—that airiest creation of the satiric fancy, *The Rape of the Lock*.

As a man, our thoughts of Pope waver between contempt and pity. The world knows him to have been inordinately vain, intoxicated by applause, and agonizingly sensitive to criticism; it knows him to have been peevish and irritable; capable, when his self-love was touched, of retaliating with a fierceness of malice fortunately rare even in the history of genius. He engaged in some petty and underhand plots in the hope of increasing his reputation, and his love of intriguing was so great that, in the famous phrase of Dr. Johnson, "he hardly drank tea without a stratagem." Yet, vindictive and spiteful as he seems, Pope loved his mother with a touching and beautiful devotion; cripple as he was, he had the heart of a soldier. In spite of the physical drag of life-long weakness and suffering, he set before himself the high purpose of excelling in his chosen art, and, in a rough and brutal time, he won and kept the headship in English letters. In extenuation of his faults it is but just to remember that he lived in a generation of slander and intrigue, when

religious belief was shaken, and noble ideals seemed dead. "The wicked asp of Twickenham," one of his many enemies called him; but delicate, tetchy, morbid, is it a wonder that he should have used his sting? Thinking of Pope, we cannot but pity the crooked and puny body; shall we dare to fail in pity for the warped and crooked soul?

## STUDY LIST

### POPE

1. **THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.** To what class of poetry does this poem belong? For account of incident on which this poem was founded see article on Pope, p. 209.

*Cf.* opening lines with those of the *Iliad*, Pope's translation, or Vergil, and note how Pope has burlesqued the epic.

It is interesting to see how closely the description of the lady's toilet follows "The Fine Lady's Journal" in *The Spectator*, No. 69, May, 1711. Other numbers of *The Spectator* may also be read to see how the life of the time has been satirized in prose and poetry.

2. **THE ESSAY ON MAN.** In this poem man is considered in the abstract in his relation to the universe. What do we find is Pope's view of man, and how does it compare with that taken by poets in the latter part of his century? Note also the difference between the view Pope takes of life and man and that taken by Carlyle, Browning, or Tennyson.

3. **SHORT POEMS.** "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day," "The Dying Christian to His Soul," "The Universal Prayer."

4. **BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** Stephen's Life of, in *English Men of Letters Series*, Johnson's Life of, in *Lives of the Poets*, Lowell's essay on, in *My Study Windows*. For *Rape of the Lock* see Courthope and Elwin's edition, introduction and notes to *Rape of the Lock*, and Hale's *Longer English Poems*. The *Essay on Man*, edited by Mark Pattison, has an excellent introduction, which, with the notes, will be found

most helpful in studying this poem. Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii., contains a good chapter on the literature of the period.

5. HISTORY. Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. ch. 4, and Sydney's *England in the Eighteenth Century* are valuable books on the period. For state of England on accession of Charles II., Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. i. ch. 8.

### ADDISON AND STEELE

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. The *Select Essays of Addison* together with Macaulay's essay on *Addison's Life and Writings*, edited by Samuel Thurber, contains some of the best essays and will be found a valuable book. Courthope's *Life of Addison*, English Men of Letters Series. Austin Dobson's *Life of Steele*, in English Worthies. Austin Dobson's *Eighteenth Century Essays* contains selections from the most important periodicals of the century. *Days with Sir Roger de Coverley* (Macmillan) is an attractive collection of the De Coverley papers only, and may be used with class. Thackeray's *English Humorists*, also the passages in his *Henry Esmond* about Addison and Steele, will be found interesting.



## PART IV

### THE MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD

Since cir. 1750

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#### CHAPTER I

##### THE BEGINNING OF MODERN LITERATURE—Cir. 1750-1830

THE history of England during the greater part of the eighteenth century, is the history of rapid and comprehensive changes in almost every department of the nation's life—industrial, religious, political, social, and intellectual. As we advance the England of Pope and Addison, now well-nigh as remote from our daily life as that of Shakespeare or Milton, recedes with wonderful swiftness, and through a rapid succession of changes we pass into the England of to-day. As we near the middle of the century the political corruption, the coldly intellectual temper, the studied repression and brilliant cynicism melt before the fervor of a rising spirituality, and new generations, actuated by diametrically opposite ideals of life, crowd forward to displace the old. This fresh national life utters itself in new forms of literature, and with the rise of Modern England we

Changes in  
eighteenth  
century Eng-  
land.

reach the beginning of a literary period surpassed only by that of the Elizabethans.

We may relate many of these changes to one great motive cause. We have watched that mood of dissolute levity which immediately succeeded the Restoration pass into an era of comparative decency and frigid "good sense." Then Addison utters his kindly but somewhat superficial strictures on fashionable follies; then Pope is before us, with his little vanities and complaisant optimism, and Swift, savage, morose, and terrible, is intriguing and place-hunting like the rest, but with the bitter inward protest of contempt and scorn of such a world. Now the nation was too inherently emotional and religious for such a mood to long endure; the higher side of men's nature began to reassert itself; and those human hopes and longings which the "freezing reason" cannot satisfy began to stir and claim their due,

"And like a man in wrath the heart  
 Stood up and answered, 'I have felt.'"

So in the drought of the desert men felt the gathering rush of new feelings, and as their hearts were again moved with pity, enthusiasm, and faith, they felt within them the great longing of the prodigal to arise and return.

The new enthusiasm and faith are seen in a great wave of religious feeling that is associated with the rise of Methodism. In the midst of the cold intellectual speculations of Bolingbroke, and the skepticism of Hume, we are startled by the passionate appeal of Whitfield and

**The rise of  
 Methodism.**

Wesley to the conscience and the heart. By 1738 the work of these men was fairly begun, and their marvelous eloquence and intense conviction struck deep into the souls of thousands. In his *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Voice of Nature* (1736), Bishop Butler relied for his support of Christianity on close and definite reasoning, but the preaching of Whitfield made the tears trickle down the grimy faces of the Bristol colliers. This influence went far outside the ranks of the Methodists themselves. In the early years of the century, the Church of England shared in the prevailing coldness and unspirituality; the filling of its offices was tainted by political intrigue, while its clergy were idle and often shamefully lax in manners and morals. Methodism, starting within the limits of the Church, helped to infuse into it, and into society at large, a new moral and spiritual earnestness.

The effects of this revival of a more spiritual life in the midst of a jovial, unbelieving, and often coarse and brutal society, are seen in the growth of a practical charity, and in an increasing sense of human brotherhood and of the inherent dignity of manhood. English history contains few things more truly beautiful than the story of this awakening of tenderness and compassion. The novel sense of pity became wide and heartfelt enough to embrace not men only, but all wantonly hurt and suffering creatures. Bull-baiting gradually fell into disfavor, and the cruel sport known as bull-running was finally suppressed at Tutbury in

Deeper sympathy with man.

1778. The poet Thomson commends the labors of the "generous band,"

"Who, touched with human woe, redressive searched  
Into the horrors of the gloomy jail." \*

John Howard endured the noisome horrors of the English prisons (1775-1789) that he might lighten the unspeakable sufferings of the captives, and Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Pitt labored for the abolition of slavery.† The criminal was no longer dragged through crowded London streets to be hanged at Tyburn, a holiday spectacle to jeering or admiring throngs; the rigors of the code which condemned wretches to death for a trifling theft were gradually softened. So, in these and countless other ways, the social revulsion against brutality and violence which marked the rise of a new England unmistakably declared itself.

To some extent we may even associate this fuller power to feel with the rise and astonishing progress of modern music, the art of pure emotion, **Händel.** both in Germany and England. Händel settled in England in 1710. He struggled for years against popular neglect and misunderstanding to win, toward the middle of the century, conspicuous recognition. It is significant to contrast the fashion-

\* *The Seasons*, "Winter," l. 358. Thomson is speaking of a jail committee of 1729. See this whole passage from l. 332-388, as good instance of the new humanity in poetry.

† Clarkson and Wilberforce began their anti-slavery agitation about 1787, enlisting the aid of Pitt. The Emancipation Bill was passed in 1833.

able audiences that, lost to common decency, had once applauded the immoral wit of Wycherley or Farquhar, with that assembly, swept by a common wave of enthusiasm and worship, which rose with one consent and stood through the singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus." \*

A comparison of England under Walpole and under Pitt helps us to realize the growth of the power of enthusiasm and imagination.

The administration of Robert Walpole Walpole and  
Pitt. (1721-1742) was an interval of profound peace, during which the energies of England were largely given to trade and the development of her internal resources. Through the increase of the Colonial trade, and from other causes, the commercial and business side of life assumed a new importance.† The peace left men free to devote their energies to money-making; the merchant gained in social position, and wealth rapidly increased.‡

Walpole, the guiding spirit of this prosperous period, was the embodiment of its prosaic and mercantile character. Country-bred, shrewd, and narrow-minded, he had great business ability, but

\* The famous chorus of praise in Händel's *Messiah*. The performance referred to was in 1743.

† See Green's *History of English People*, vol. iv. pp. 126-160.

‡ In the *Spectator* Sir Roger de Coverley stands for the landed gentry, and Sir Andrew Freeport, the city merchant, for the rising merchant class, v. *Spectator*, No. cxxvi.; v. also Scott's *Rob Roy* for contrast between the Tory squire, who stands by Church and King, and the new commercial magnate; v. Gibbin's *Industrial History of England*, p. 145, for reference to Scott's *Rob Roy*, etc.



was incapable of approaching life from its ideal or imaginative side. Openly corrupt in his political methods, and openly incredulous as to the possibility of conducting practical politics by other means, he laughed at appeals to man's higher nature as "school-boy flights," and declared that men would come out of their rhapsodies about patriotism, and grow wiser. Such traits are characteristic of the early eighteenth century England; we rightly associate that low estimate of human nature on which Walpole habitually acted with Pope's sneering contempt and Swift's fierce and appalling misanthropy. But, as we advance toward the middle of the century, those higher impulses which were manifesting themselves in so many different directions were at work in politics also. Before the fall of Walpole loftier and purer political ideals had already begun to take form in the so-called Patriot party, and by 1757 William Pitt, the animating spirit of the new government, was virtually at the head of affairs. A great historian has observed\* that Pitt did a work for politics similar to that which Wesley was, at the same time, accomplishing for religion. He believed in his countrymen, and England responded to his trust. Instead of debauching public morals by open corruption, he made his passionate appeal to patriotism. The

The expansion of England. interests of England, seemingly narrowed in Walpole's time to insular limits, expanded before men's eyes, as, about the middle of the century, the nation entered upon that

\* S. R. Gardiner, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, title "England."

great duel with the rival power of France which was to raise her from an island monarchy to a world empire. Clive's victory at Plassey in 1757 laid the foundation of her supremacy in India, Wolfe's capture of Quebec in 1759 established her dominion in America. Two worlds, the rich civilization of the ancient East, the vast and undeveloped resources of the new West, were almost at the same instant within her grasp. "We are forced," said Horace Walpole, "to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one."\* Men's hearts were warm with a glow of patriotic pride and a sense of England's mighty destiny. A widening horizon, a more cosmopolitan spirit, finds its way into literature. In Southey's *Curse of Kehama* we enter the world of the East, with its unknown gods; in Moore's *Lalla Rookh* we journey with a marriage cavalcade through the Vale of Cashmere, surrounded by all the splendors of the Orient; in Byron's *Childe Harold* the scenic background to the somber figure of the pilgrim is Europe itself, brought before us with a sympathetic breadth and truth unmatched in the history of the literature.

While patriotism and imagination were thus quickened by the great part that England began to play in the world-wide drama of human destiny, at home a silent revolution was transforming the aspect of life and the very structure of society. From the building of the first canal by James Brindley in 1761, new facilities

Industrial  
and social  
changes.

\* Quoted by Green, *History of English People*, vol. iv. p. 193, which see.

for transportation and new methods of manufacture follow quickly on each other, until the agricultural England of old times becomes the industrial England of the nineteenth century, and the "workshop of the world." Following hard on these changes are those problems of labor and capital which confront our modern world.

And side by side with all these new things are the initial steps in one of the greatest historic movements

since the Renaissance, the rise of modern democracy. With the conviction of human brotherhood, with the passionate sense of the worth and dignity of indi-

**The growth of democracy and the age of revolution.** vidual manhood, come the blood and violence of those social upheavals which usher in our modern world. Men are possessed with a fever for the "rights of man"; they dream of a wholesale reorganization of society, and the coming of an idyllic Golden Age; they struggle to convert Rousseau's gospel of a "return to nature" into a practical reality. In America, a Republic is established on the foundations of human freedom and equality; in feudal France, after generations of dumb misery, the people lift their bowed backs from labor to wreak on their rulers the accumulated vengeance of centuries. The finest spirits of England are thrilled and exalted by this flood of enthusiasm for the cause of man, the word "liberty" sounds as a talisman in men's ears, and the spirit of revolution controls and inspires the best productions of the literature.

We have noted the working of new forces in English society in Wesley and Pitt during the

earlier half of the eighteenth century, or from about 1740. Modern England, thus beginning to take shape even during the lifetime of Pope and Walpole, had a literature of its own ; but the older literary

Literature  
after the  
death of  
Pope.

methods and ideas by no means came to an end with the beginning of the new. Accordingly, after the rise of this new literature, or from about 1725, we find the literature of England flowing, as it were, in two separate streams. The one, marked by a mode or fashion of writing which began definitely with Dryden, may be traced from Dryden on through Pope, its most perfect representative, through Samuel Johnson, until its dissipation in the time of Wordsworth ; the other, springing from a different source and of a different spirit, its purer and more natural music audible almost before that of Pope has fairly begun, flows on with gathered force and volume, and with deepening channel, almost to our own time. We have traced the first of these streams until the death of Pope ; we must now indicate the general direction of its course after that event. Many of the features which had characterized this Restoration literature in the reign of Anne were prolonged far into the century, and some writers modeled their style on Pope and Addison until toward the century's close. The prosaic spirit, in which intellectual force was warmed by no glow of passion, continued to find a suitable form of expression in didactic and satiric verse. In the protracted moralizings of Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742-1745), and in Blair's *Grave* (1743), a shorter but somewhat similar poem, we



detect a general resemblance to the *Essay on Man*; while Henry Brooke's poem on *The Universal Beauty* (1735) and Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1791) obviously echo the favorite metrical cadence of Pope. In the two works last named, poetry is called in to expound science instead of theology or philosophy, but the tone is none the less didactic; and it is worth noting that in *The Botanic Garden* the Rosicrucian sylphs and gnomes of *The Rape of the Lock* reappear as personifications of the elemental forces of nature.

But there is something more important for us to notice than such single instances of the survival of the early literary spirit. For forty years after the death of Pope, the greatest personal force in English literature and criticism, the dominant power in the literary circles of London, was Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), a man whose sympathies lay with the literary standards of the earlier part of the century, and who had but little comprehension of the new spirit which, in his lifetime, was beginning to displace them. Johnson, the son of a poor bookseller in Lichfield, came up to London in 1737, with three acts of a play in his pocket, and the determination to make his way through literature. For many years his life was one of terrible hardship, but he bore his privations manfully, with unflinching courage, and with a beautiful tenderness toward those yet more unfortunate. He obtained employment on a periodical, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and soon afterward made a great hit by his satire of *London*

Samuel  
Johnson.



(1738), a poem which attracted the favorable notice of Pope. He wrote another satire, *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), conducted *The Rambler* (March 20, 1750, to March 14, 1752), and *The Idler* (April, 1758, to April, 1760), papers similar in design to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, and in 1755 published his *English Dictionary*. Shortly after the accession of George III. Johnson's burdens were lifted by the grant of a pension of three hundred pounds a year. During the remainder of his life he ruled as the literary autocrat of London. He was the leading spirit in a literary club founded by him in 1764 in conjunction with the painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds. Burke, Goldsmith, Garrick, Fox, Gibbon, and Sheridan were members of this club, yet among such men Johnson maintained his supremacy. Macaulay says that the "verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known all over London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheet to the service of the trunk maker and the pastry cook."\* After writing several other prose works, Johnson died December 13, 1784, full of years and honors. While Johnson's works are now comparatively little read, he remains one of the most familiar and strongly marked personages in the literature. "The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea

Personal peculiarities.

\* Article on "Johnson," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the *anfractuosities* of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.”\*

We cannot now do more than notice his connection with the literary history of his century. While

Johnson the prose writer of an age of prose. he wrote some strong and quotable verse, full of vigorous and telling rhetoric, he is pre-eminently a prose writer in an age of prose. The uninspired and practical

temper of his time found prose rather than poetry its natural medium. And while its great prose writers were not given to lofty flights, they showed a wonderful power of minute and truthful observation. Throughout the earlier literature of the century, whether poetry or prose, we find a painstaking definiteness and accuracy in the reproduction of contemporary life. In spite of their play of fancy, such works as *The Rape of the Lock* and many of the periodical essays are marked by a careful and often pitiless realism. In the *Robinson Crusoe* of Daniel De Foe (1719), this realistic presentation of life assumes a narrative form. In this wonderful story, as in the same writer's *History of the Plague* (1722), our sense of reality is perfect through the patient enumeration of a vast number of details. The same irresistible naturalness pervades the *Gulliver's Travels* of Jonathan Swift (1726), which is triumphantly

\* Article on “Johnson,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

realistic in spite of its fantastic elements. It was during Johnson's lifetime that the novel of daily life and manners, the most perfect outcome of this realistic prose, took definite form. From the publication of the *Pamela* of Samuel Richardson in 1740, the novel, which in our day takes the place of the drama in the Elizabethan age, steadily advances until our time. This prose, and that of Robertson, Hume, Gibbon, and the other great historians we cannot stop to consider ; but it should be remembered that Johnson was connected with the development of the novel by his publication of the didactic story of *Rasselas* (1759), and that his essays, his series of *Lives of the Poets*, and his account of *A Trip to the Hebrides* give him a foremost place among the prose writers of his day. His poems of *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* follow the satiric style made popular by Dryden and Pope, a style greatly in vogue when Johnson began his literary career ; and are as obviously modeled after Pope in their versification and manner. *The Rambler* is as plainly imitated from *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, although through Johnson's ponderous, many-syllabled style it follows them, in the clever phrase of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "as a pack horse follows a hunter." Yet while Johnson thus stands as the bulwark of the old order, both by his own work and by his critical verdicts on that of others, all about him new agitations were already rife. Absolute as was his literary dictatorship, his throne was reared on the verge of that revolution which begins the modern period of our literary history. The

industrial and social England, the rise of which we have suggested, was taking shape between Johnson's arrival in London in 1737 and his death in 1784; new feelings utterly opposed to many of his traditions and prejudices, and alien to his understanding and habits of thought, were quickening into life around him. While he held steadily to the ancient ways, those changes in literary standards had already begun which have led to the reversal of nearly every important dictum uttered by this great literary law-giver in matters of criticism.

The rising literature is obviously but another outcome of that general revolt against the earlier standards of the century, to which we have

The characteristics of the new literature.

already alluded. If we would understand it, we must read it in its due relation to those deeper inward experiences and to those outward changes through which the nation was passing. It is a literature purified by the new love of nature, by the new sympathy for suffering, by the new spirit of democracy; it caught up and relighted the extinguished torch of passion and imagination, dropped from the hand of the last Elizabethan. Its departure from the spirit of the classical school showed itself in a delight in the world of mediæval chivalry, and in the ballads of the people which had been passed by unnoticed. In form it broke away from the narrow trammels of the favorite Augustan measure, to revive the meters of the Elizabethans, or to indulge in greater metrical freedom. The literature of the age of Anne is essentially slight and artificial; born of the town it



deals largely with the surface aspects and frivolities of a fashionable city life. It is apt to be didactic rather than imaginative; it is strong in satire and deficient in charity and human sympathy. But, like Falstaff, men began to "babble of green fields." The barbarous condition of the highways, ill-made, neglected, and beset by "gentlemen of the road," had rendered traveling laborious and even dangerous, but the last forty years of the century saw a general improvement in the facilities for travel, which tended to break down the barriers between town and country. "The closer contact between town and country life, the revelation to a cultivated and intellectual town world of the majestic scenes of natural beauty, and the infusion of a new refinement, perception of beauty, and intellectual activity into country life, contributed largely to a memorable change which was passing over the English intellect."\* But back of this increased readiness of access to nature, there lay deep-seated an impatience of the confined limits of the town, the stirring of instincts that impelled the age to seek out quiet and healing in an unspoilt and freer world. With an answering impulse the literature turned from those city streets, through which in *Trivia* the muse of Gay had delighted, to regions untainted by artifice and fashion. So in the midst of the soulless literature of the town, with its close atmosphere, its drawing-room pettiness, its painted faces and its slanderous tongues, there comes to our

\* Lecky, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. vi. p. 180. The reader is referred to his account of improvements in roads from p. 173 to p. 184.



heated cheeks the fresh, pure air from the woods and fields, as poetry turns from Belinda at her toilet to the uncontaminated world of nature. In 1725 Allan Ramsay, an Edinburgh wig-maker and bookseller, published his *Gentle Shepherd*,\* a pastoral in which we catch a genuine whiff of country air, and where, instead of the classic Damons and Daphnes which Pope's conventional method led him to introduce on English soil, we have veritable country people, plain Patie and Roger. Indeed, Ramsay's poem was an attempt to carry out the views of certain critics† who had attacked the artificial method of pastoral writing, of which Pope was then the most notable example, for the ingenuity of its classic allusions and for its want of fidelity to actual country life. About the same time another Scotchman, James Thomson (1700-1748), began the publication of *The Seasons* (1726-1730), a poem full of truthful and beautiful descriptions of nature and of country life, seen under the changing aspects of the four seasons. This work shows a close and sympathetic observation of nature, but the lack of entire simplicity and directness in its style tells us that poetry was not yet free from the conventionalities and mannerisms of the Augustan writers.

From the publication of *The Seasons* we find a growing delight in nature and a further departure

\* The original version of *The Gentle Shepherd* was included, under the name of "Patie and Roger," in a collection of Ramsay's poems, published 1721.

† See the criticism in *The Guardian* for April 7, 1713, No. 23. See also *Life of Pope*, *supra*, p. 208.

from the poetic manner of Pope, in the beautiful *Odes* of William Collins (1746) and in the famous *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* of Thomas Gray (1751). Nature and "the short and simple annals of the poor" are the respective themes of the *Traveller* (1764) and *The Deserted Village* (1770) of Oliver Goldsmith, while *The Minstrel* of James Beattie (Bk. 1, 1771) shows us a youthful poetic genius nourished and inspired by the influence of mountain, sky, and sea. This poetry of nature was carried forward in the work of George Crabbe, who possessed the power to bring nature before us by his truth of observation and his unaffected, if homely, style. A still further step was made in the poems of William Cowper, whose *Task* (1785) is a great advance on the work of Thomson in the reality and directness of its natural descriptions.

And this change in the spirit of poetry was accompanied by significant changes in poetic form. During the years when the French influence was uppermost, the decasyllabic couplet was employed, in longer poems, almost to the exclusion of any other form of verse. Dryden sought to substitute it for the blank verse of the Elizabethans; Milton's refusal to use it in *Paradise Lost* was in such flagrant defiance of the critical canons of the day that sundry well-meaning admirers of the substance of that great epic paraphrased it in the sovereign meter to remove its harsh irregularity in form.\*

We find one explanation of the extravagant popu-

\* See article in *Andover Review*, January 1891, "Some Paraphrasers of Milton."

larity of this verse in its perfect adaptability to the poetic needs of the time. The heroic couplet, as employed by Pope, by its pauses falling with a somewhat monotonous recurrence at the end of the line, lent itself to that clear, terse, and epigrammatic manner in which the age delighted. Instead of the slow evolution of the Miltonic sentence, complex in structure, with the "sense variously drawn out from one verse" (*i. e.*, line) "to the next," we have sentences so broken up and packed in handy packages of two lines each, that one can snatch up a couplet almost anywhere, and carry it off for quoting purposes. But from about 1726 the sovereignty of the heroic couplet was broken, and the reviving influence of the Elizabethan poets showed itself in a recurrence to their poetic manner. Lowell has aptly dubbed Pope's favorite meter, "the rocking-horse measure," and doubtless people began to weary of the monotonous regularity of its rise and fall. In *The Seasons*, Thomson not only turned to nature, he abandoned the heroic couplet for blank verse. The Spenserian stanza,\* which had been discarded except by a few obscure experimentalists, grew in favor, and was employed in Shenstone's *Schoolmistress* (1742), Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, Beattie's *Minstrel*, and in a number of minor poems. Meanwhile Collins' *Odes* marked the advent of a poet with the fresh, inborn lyrical impulse. By virtue of this incommunicable gift of song, Collins mounts above the

\* V. chapter on the Spenserian revival, in Phelps' *Beginning of the English Romantic Movement*; also Appendix I. for list of Spenserian imitators.

monotonous levels of didactic verse that stretch about him. Admirable poetry had been produced in England since the death of Milton, but its excellence was chiefly of a kind that could be subjected to a critical analysis and accounted for. The means, rhetorical or otherwise, employed by Dryden and Pope to produce a given effect are, to a great extent, comprehensible to us, while we applaud the result as a triumph of premeditated art. But in the refined and gentle charm of Collins, in the subdued and softened beauty of his coloring, and the lingering and delicate grace of his lyrical movements, we encounter excellence of a wholly different order ; we are aware of an indefinable poetic quality the presence of which, unlike the excellence of Pope, can only be fully recognized by the artistic sense, inasmuch as it is, by its very nature, incapable of proof. Thomson wrote of nature with surprising minuteness and accuracy, but Collins with the inspired touch of a higher sympathy. Swinburne says of him : "Among all our English poets, he has, it seems to me, the closest affinity to our great contemporary school of French landscape painters. Corot on canvas might have signed his *Ode to Evening* ; Millet might have given us some of his graver studies, and left them, as he did, no whit the less sweet for their softly austere and simply tender purity."\*

In the last quarter of the century William Blake (1757-1827) holds an important place in the advance of the new school of poetry. This singular man,

\* Critical essay in Ward's *English Poets*, vol. iii., title "Collins."



richly gifted as painter as well as poet, was eccentric to the very verge of madness. Indeed most of his work seems to hover on the dubious border-land between insanity and reason, yet so wonderful is it that we are uncertain whether we should attribute its strangeness to the poet's wildness, or to our conventional dullness of perception. Nevertheless, in certain important particulars, Blake's poetry was strongly expressive of the tendencies of his time. He, too, takes up again the interrupted strain of the Elizabethans, recalling not merely their disused meter, but their gusts of passionate intensity and bold flights of imagination. Thus the spirited dramatic fragment *Edward III.*\* is instinct with the lavish and vaulting energy of Marlowe.† On the other hand, many poems of Blake's are remarkable for a limpid and inspired simplicity which made him the predecessor of Wordsworth. In his love of children and of animals, in his profound sympathy with suffering, in his lyrical beauty, and in his feeling for nature he represents the best tendencies of his time.

While in literature the influence of the Elizabethans was thus overcoming those foreign fashions which for a time had superseded it, on the stage the greatest productions of Shakespeare were being brought vividly home to the popular life and imagination. Acting, like literature and life, threw aside some of its burden

Garrick and the Shakespearean revival.

\* "Blake imitated Spenser, and in his short fragment of *Edward III.* we hear again the note of Marlowe's violent imagination."—Brooke's *Primer English Literature*, p. 165.

† According to Gilchrist this fragment was "printed in



of stiffness and artificiality, and, after the conventional mannerisms and declamation of such actors as Macklin and Quin, the comparative truth and naturalness of Garrick took London by storm. Garrick's great London triumph dates from his performance of Richard III. at Drury Lane in 1741, after he had won recognition in the provincial theaters. His influence on the popular taste may be conjectured from the fact that he played in no less than seventeen Shakespearean parts, and produced twenty-four of Shakespeare's plays during his management at Drury Lane. Garrick retired in 1776.

Mrs. Siddons, one of the greatest of tragic actresses, whose *Lady Macbeth* and *Queen Katherine* are among the proudest traditions of the English stage, won her first success in London in 1782, her brother, John Kemble, appearing the following year. Through these mighty actors the stage fell in with and helped forward the revolution against the taste and standards of the critical school.

But while such new elements were coming into English life and verse, we must remember that Johnson and others continued to follow doggedly the track of Pope. *The Seasons* preceded *London* by thirteen years, and Collins' *Odes* were a year earlier than *The Vanity of Human Wishes*; yet in the poetry of Johnson we have but the frigidity and didacticism of Pope without his lightness, fancy, or grace, and we look in vain for Thomson's feeling for nature or Collins' fresh lyric note.

1783, written 1768-1777." Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, vol i. p. 26.

That deep feeling which, as the eighteenth century advanced, impelled men to turn from the artificial life of society to the world of nature was closely associated with a sympathetic interest in the hitherto unregarded lives of the country-folk and the poor. The representative writers of Queen Anne's time had despised and satirized humanity. We have seen Pope's low estimate of it, his malice toward men, his ingrained disbelief in women; and even more bitter and terrible is the corrosive scorn and hatred which, as in *Gulliver's Travels*, the unhappy Swift pours out upon the race. But in the new group of writers there breathes that growing tenderness for the miseries of the neglected and the poor, that sympathy for all living creatures, and that ever-deepening sense of the nobility of man and of the reality of human brotherhood, which we have already noted as a motive power in the history of the time. Gray's *Elegy* is not merely a charming rural vignette, it is the poet's tribute to the worth of obscure and humble lives. *The Deserted Village* is an indignant protest against the wealth and luxury which encroach upon the simple happiness of the peasant, and in such lines as these we hear the voice of the new democracy :

" Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay ;  
*Princes and lords may flourish or may fade—  
A breath can make them as a breath has made—*  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed can never be supplied." \*

\* *The Deserted Village*, l. 51, etc.

Crabbe brought the realism of the earlier part of the century to the painting of the homely and often repulsive life of the country poor. In the opening lines of *The Village* he scorns the artificial pastoral of the older school, and declares

“I paint the cot  
As Truth will paint it, and as Bards will not.”\*

The delight in nature, the renewed religious sentiment, the sympathy with man, and the love of animals, all find expression in the life and work of Cowper. Not only did he declare, as in the familiar lines, that

“God made the country and man made the town,”

but he lived in a natural harmony with God's works, so that even the timid hare did not shun his footsteps nor the stock-dove suspend her song at his approach. His gentle nature rises in indignation against cruelty, if it be but the cruelty of the man

“Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm,”

and the indifference of the world to human suffering shocks and distresses him. Timid as he seems, he cries out with the voice of the on-coming democracy against “oppression and deceit,” against slavery.

“My ear is pained,  
My soul is sick with every day's report  
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.  
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart  
It does not feel for man.”†

This new sympathy with man and nature is further represented by the artist-poet William

\* *The Village*, bk. i. See the entire opening passage.

† *The Task*, bk. ii. l. 5.

Blake (1757-1827),\* and by Robert Burns (1759-1796) until it culminates in the poets of the so-called Lake School, William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), and Robert Southey (1774-1843). With the three writers last named, and with Sir Walter Scott, who represents a phase of the movement of which we have not yet spoken, the break with the classical or critical school of Pope becomes complete. This entire movement was the expression in England of an impulse to abandon a too literal and subservient imitation of the classic writers for such an independent expression as their own genius prompted. In Germany a like movement took place in the "Sturm und Drang" (Storm and Pressure) school of Herder and others (in 1770-1782), and later in the Romantic school especially distinguished for its enthusiasm for the Middle Ages. A corresponding school arose in France during the early half of the present century, of which the great poet was Victor Hugo, the great critic Sainte-Beuve. These modern or anti-classic writers, whether in Germany, England, or France, are styled Romanticists, or writers belonging to the Romantic school. By Romantic, used in this technical sense, is meant the distinctively new spirit, in literature or art, of the modern world, relying mainly on itself for its subjects, its inspiration, and its rules of art, and denying that classic precedents are in all cases of binding authority.† Thus the drama of the

**Definition of  
Romantic.**

\* See p. 237, *supra*.

† For elaborate discussion of the meaning of Romantic, v. Phelps' *Beginning of the English Romantic Movement*.



Elizabethans is often called the English Romantic drama, because, unlike that of the French, it disregarded certain dramatic principles of the Greeks; while Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, and the other writers of that group, are styled Romantic, because they were animated by a modern spirit, because they trusted to inspiration rather than to precedent, and opposed the Classic school of Pope.

One great element of this Romantic movement, first in England and afterward in Germany, was a delight in the popular songs and ballads, a natural and spontaneous poetic form hitherto ignored as outside the bounds of literature. The English and Scottish ballads, simple and genuine songs coming straight from the hearts of the people, untinged by classic conventionality and unmodified by foreign standards, were collected in Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). After this many similar collections were published, and about this time poets began to reproduce the ballad form. The most noteworthy of these early imitations are the ballads of Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), amazing works of genius which their boy author pretended to have found among some ancient records of Bristol. The same tendency is shown in the *Ossian* of James Macpherson (1762), a professed translation of some Gaelic epic poems, and in such simple ballads as Goldsmith's *Hermit*,\* Shenstone's *Jemmy Dawson* (1745), and Mickle's *Mariner's Wife*. Coleridge's *Ancient Mar-*

\* Goldsmith was accused of taking the idea of this ballad from "The Friar of Orders Gray" (Percy's *Reliques*); which appeared in the same year (1765). He claims to have read



*iner* and *Christabel* are a noble outcome of the old ballad literature, and from it also sprang the best poetry of Walter Scott.

When we classify and arrange all these stupendous changes in the external conditions of men's lives, and in men's mental and spiritual estimate of life's meaning and purpose, the great and peculiar place of the eighteenth century in history begins to take shape in our minds. We see that it bears a relation to our modern civilization similar to that which the fourteenth century held to the Renaissance. Looked at from the external or material side, we are able to feel the force of Mr. Frederic Harrison's words: "Everyone can state for himself the hyperbolic contrast between the material condition we see to-day and the material condition in which society managed to live over two or three centuries ago, nay, ten, or twenty, or a hundred centuries ago. . . The last hundred years," that is, since about 1770 or 1780, "have seen in England the most sudden change in our material and external life that is recorded in history."\* When we endeavor to grasp this transition period, not only externally, but from every side, we see that its beginning dates from the last years of the administration of Walpole, or from about 1730 or 1740. To that decade we have referred the rise or growth of a new spirit in religion, politics, literature, and even music.

*The Hermit* to Bishop Percy before the publication of the "Friar."

\* Essay on "The Nineteenth Century," in *The Choice of Books*, p. 424, etc.

Its close is marked by England's entrance upon her long struggle with France for the prize of half the world. Between 1755 and 1765 we place those improvements in transportation and manufactures, we begin the "industrial revolution," and at the end of this decade Watt's utilization of steam adds its tremendous impetus to the movement. From about this time the advance toward democracy becomes more rapid and apparent. We enter the era of a bold opposition to authority in John Wilkes and the *Letters of Junius*; of the admission of reporters to the House of Commons and the consequent increase in the power of the press; of the American and French revolutions, and of the outburst in literature of the revolutionary spirit. Finally, we may group many of these changes about two centers: (a) that longing for a more simple and natural life and the revolt against accepted standards which accompanied a renaissance of the more religious and ideal elements in society; (b) that feeling of compassion for suffering, that sense of the worth of the individual, which we associate with the growth of democracy. The two great historic movements of the century define themselves as:

1. The expansion of England into a world power.
2. The rise of democracy, with all those industrial and social changes which accompany and forward it.

The effect of these movements on literature has been great in the past and is likely to be enormous in the future.

## ROBERT BURNS.—1759-1796

The soul of the new England, its moving tenderness, its breadth of charity, its deepening notes of lyric passion, throb in the songs of the Scotch plowman, Robert Burns. The lives and struggles of the mass of men that toiled and died about him were utterly outside the range of Pope's narrow sympathies and understanding; his genius lights up for us only that fashionable, frivolous, or literary world in which he moved, leaving all without in darkness. The scholarly Gray had written of the poor with refinement and taste, surrounding them with a certain poetic halo; but Burns spoke not about, but for them, by his birthright and heritage of poverty and labor. The young democracy hurrying on the day through the labors of Brindley, the mechanic; Hargraves, the poor weaver, or Watt, the mathematical instrument maker's apprentice, finds its poet-prophet in a farmer's boy of the Scotch lowlands. The natural music, the irresistible melody of Burns' songs, was learned not from the principles of literary lawgivers, but from the songs of the people. In their captivating *lilt*, their rich humor, their note of elemental passion, is revealed the soul of the peasant class. "Poetry," wrote the great poet who preached a little later the superiority of inspiration to artifice, "poetry comes from the heart and goes to the heart."\* This is eminently true of the poetry of Burns, whose best songs have that heartfelt and broadly human quality which penetrates where more

\* William Wordsworth.

cultured verse fails to enter, and which outlasts the most elaborate productions of a less instinctive art. Burns himself assures us :

“ The Muse, nae Poet ever fand her,  
Till by himsel’ he learned to wander,  
Adown some trotting burn’s meander,  
An’ no think lang :  
O sweet, to stray an’ pensive ponder  
A heart-felt sang.” \*

Born out of his own experience, Burns’ poems are racy of the soil, as frankly local in subject as in dialect. He is not ashamed to paint the homely and everyday aspects of the life about him; and he does this with a boldness and freedom which mark genius of an independent and original power. “The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him . . . and thus over the lowest provinces of man’s existence he pours the glory of his own soul.” † The family group, after their week of toil, gathered in patriarchal simplicity about the cotter’s hearthstone; the blazing ingle of the country tavern, where the drunken cronies, “victorious o’er all ills,” sing their jolly catches, oblivious of the storm without, or the wrathful wife at home; the current controversy between the Auld and New Lights in the Kirk; a wounded hare, or a flock of startled water-fowl; such are the homely materials

\* “ To William Simpson.”

† Carlyle, “ Essay on Burns.”

ready to his hand, from which his poems are fashioned. We find in them that high gift which cannot be gained by a study of any *Art of Poetry*, of seeing with a fresh and penetrating insight. For while in one sense Burns' poems are local, they are none the less for all the world, so instinctively does he fasten upon those features of the life about him which best reflect in little some general human experience, and so appeal to the common heart of mankind. The spirit of Tam o' Shanter, defying care and the morrow, is the spirit of Sir Toby in *Twelfth Night*, rousing

"the night owl with a catch."

Set to a more heroic key, it is that of Antony when he exclaims, while the sword hangs over him :

"Come,  
Let's have one other gaudy night : call to me  
All my sad Captains : fill our bowls once more.  
Let's mock the midnight bell." \*

And more, what is this but an expression of that imperative desire to snatch the present joy which, in greater or smaller measure, is in us all. The poet who can look through the vesture in which life clothes itself, and find beneath the abiding human significance, who can enter into and immortalize those elements of pleasure, pain, and passion which make the substratum of our human comedy, that poet has shown us the universal in the local.

Robert Burns, the son of a small farmer in Ayr-

\* *Antony and Cleopatra*, act iii. scene 2.



shire, was born January 25, 1759. His family were poor, so that Burns could get but little regular education, and remained "a hardworked plowboy." Through all his labor he was a great reader, having a ballad book before him at meal times and whistling the songs of Scotland while guiding the plow. On the death of his father in 1784, Robert and his brother and sisters took a farm together, but it proved unprofitable. By this time he had written numerous songs, and had gained by them considerable local reputation. His affairs were so involved that he thought of leaving the country, but changed his mind on receiving an invitation from a Dr. Blacklock, who had heard of his poetical ability, to visit Edinburgh. At Edinburgh, Burns, with his genius and flavor of rusticity, his massive head and glowing eyes, became the reigning sensation. In 1788 he leased a farm in Dumfriesshire, married Jean Armour, and spent one of his few peaceful and happy years. In 1789 he was appointed exciseman, that is, the district inspector of goods liable to a tax. From this time the habit of intemperance gained on him. His health and spirits failed, and spells of reckless drinking were followed by intervals of remorse and attempted recovery. His genius did not desert him, and some of his best songs were composed during this miserable time. He died July 21, 1796, worn out and prematurely old at thirty-seven, one of the great song writers of the world.

In spite of those weaknesses which cut off a life "that might have grown full straight," Burns' poetry is unmistakably the utterance of a sincere, large-

hearted, and essentially noble nature, pleasure-loving and full of laughter as a child, yet broken by a man's grief ; a nature with more than a woman's tenderness and with the poet's soul quivering at the throb of pain.

“ Still thou art blest, compared wi' me,  
 The present only toucheth thee ;  
 But och ! I backward cast my e'e  
     On prospects drear !  
 An' forward, tho' I canna see,  
     I guess and fear.”

Here in the midst of the lingering affectations of the time vibrates the anguish of Burns' *lyrical cry*, quivering with the unmistakable accent of human suffering. This is the universal language of passion not to be learned in the schools. Hence Burns' love songs, from the impassioned lyric flow of “My Luvie is Like a Red, Red Rose,” or “O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast,” to the quiet anguish of “Ae Fond Kiss and then We Sever,” or the serene beauty of “To Mary in Heaven,” are among the truest and best in the language.

In “The Cotter's Saturday Night,” as we enter the dwelling and identify ourselves with the daily life of the poor, we feel for ourselves that touch of brotherhood which in other poems it is Burns' mission to directly declare. Never perhaps since Langland's *Piers Plowman* has the complaint of the poor found such articulate expression.

“ See yonder poor, o'erlabored wight,  
 So abject, mean, and vile,

Who begs a brother of the earth  
 To give him leave to toil ;  
 And see his lordly fellow-worm  
 His poor petition spurn,  
 Unmindful though a weeping wife  
 And helpless offspring mourn."

When Burns wrote that

" Man's inhumanity to man  
 Makes countless thousands mourn,"

he expressed what thousands were coming to feel ;  
 when he wrote

" A king can make a belted knight,  
 A marquis, duke, and a' that ;  
 But an honest man's aboon his might,  
 Guid faith he maunna fa' that,

For a' that, and a' that,  
 Their dignities and a' that,  
 The pith o' sense and pride o' worth  
 Are higher ranks than a' that,"

he gave to the world the greatest declaration in poetry of human equality and the glory of simple manhood. But, like that of Cowper, Burns' comprehensive sympathy reaches beyond the circle of human life. He stands at the furrow to look at the "tim'rous" field-mouse, whose tiny house his plow has laid in ruins, and his soul is broad enough to think of the trembling creature gently and humbly as his

" Poor earth-born companion  
 An' fellow-mortal."

Like Byron, he was a poet of the revolution, but he distinguished more clearly than Byron between the shams and conventionalities which he attacks, and that which was enduring and worthy of reverence. Merciless and daring in his satire upon the cant and hypocrisy of those who, as he thought, used religion as a cloak for wickedness, he had himself a deeply reverential and religious nature which never confused the abuse of the thing with the thing abused.\* He is the poet of nature as well as of man; he would make the streams and burnies of Scotland shine in verse with the Ilissus and the Tiber, and

“ Sing Auld Coila’s plains and fells ; ”

and finally in his stirring songs of Bannockburn he is the poet of patriotic Scotland. “ Lowland Scotland,” it has been said, “ came in with her warriors and went out with her bards. It came in with William Wallace and Robert Bruce, and went out with Robert Burns and Walter Scott. The first two made the history; the last two told the story and sung the song.”

## STUDY LIST

### *BURNS*

I. “ The Cotter’s Saturday Night ; ” “ Tam o’ Shanter ; ” “ The Twa Dogs ; ” “ The Brigs of Ayr.”

II. SYMPATHY WITH NATURE AND ANIMALS, “ To a Mountain Daisy ; ” “ To a Mouse on Turning up her Nest with a

\* V. Epistle to the Rev. Dr. McMath, verse v, “ They tak’ religion in their mouths,” and the one following.

Plough ;" "On Scaring some Water-fowl in Loch Turit ;"  
 "On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by Me."

III. "Address to the Deil ;" "Address to the Unco' Guid."

IV. SONGS.—"O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast ;" "John Anderson, My Jo ;" "To Mary in Heaven ;" "Highland Mary ;" "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon ;" "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton ;" "O, My Luve's like a Red, Red Rose ;" "Scots Wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled ;" "Is there for Honest Poverty ;" "Macpherson's Farewell."

V. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—Carlyle's *Essay on Burns* ; Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry*, p. 179 ; Shairp's *Life of Burns*, English Men of Letters Series ; Professor Blackie's *Life of Burns*, Great Writer Series ; v. also poems on Burns by Wordsworth, and by Whittier.

#### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.—1770-1850

Toward the close of the eighteenth century we reach, in the French Revolution, the most stormy and critical period in the history of modern Europe. Toward this consummation Europe had been rapidly moving. Poet and philosopher had gone before it, while to the toiling masses, starved, overtaxed, oppressed, the burden was becoming intolerable. Now, during the early acts of that terrible drama, the cloud-land visions and lofty speculations of poet and philosopher, looking for the coming of a Golden Age of peace and brotherhood, seemed to many to be passing out of the region of speculation into the world of substantial fact. Cowper in *The Task* had cried out against the Bastille as a shameful "house of bondage" ;\* four years later it fell before the fury of a Parisian mob (1789). Then

\* *The Task*, Bk. v. The passage should be read in class.



“ France her giant limbs upreared,  
 And with that oath which smote earth, air, and sea,  
 Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free.” \*

Europe looked on breathless, as the whole glittering fabric of French feudalism, rotten at the base, suddenly crashed into ruin. The ancient barriers of custom and authority were swept away as in a night; the floods were out; the Revolution begun. Blake walked the streets of London wearing the red cockade of the revolutionists, and the passionate hopes for the future of the race broadened far beyond the old national limits, to embrace the whole family of man. Even the great statesman Pitt sympathized with the Revolutionists, and Fox is said to have exclaimed, on hearing of the destruction of the Bastille, “How much is this the greatest event that ever happened in the world, and how much the

best!” Edmund Burke, indeed, stood aloof from the rest, a solitary and impregnable tower of conservatism.

Burke was not only great as a statesman and orator, he was master of a noble and scholarly prose style, and was one of the profoundest political thinkers that England has produced. He threw the full force of his vast powers into a book—*Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790)—which remains as one of the literary monuments of the time. While Burke could not see far enough to discern the ultimate outcome of the Revolution, he detected, as the enthusiasts about him failed to do, the signs of weakness and disaster, and foretold that failure, which to

\* Coleridge, “France, An Ode.”

him was its only apparent consequence. "Believe me, sir," he wrote, "those who attempt to level never equalize." He looked back upon the cherished ideals and institutions of historic Europe, and felt that their very existence was hanging in the balance. "People," he declared, "will not look forward to posterity who never look back to their ancestors." In the insults offered to the beautiful and unhappy Marie Antoinette, he saw the signal of the death of chivalry. "The Age of Chivalry is gone. That of selfish economists and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever."\* In Edinburgh the young Walter Scott, whose intense sympathy with that chivalric past was to revive its glories in the pages of poetry and romance, looked on at the fury of demolition with characteristic disapproval. But for the most part the hopes of youth, and of all the ardent and enthusiastic spirits of the time, went out toward the revolutionists in a great torrent of exultation. The imagination of the youthful poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey, all in the impressionable years of opening manhood when the Revolution began, was fired by the idea that the world was being made anew. They trod the earth in rapture, their eyes fixed upon a vision of the dawn. Looking back upon this time one of their number wrote :

" Bliss was it in that Dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very heaven." †

\* For all these passages v. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

† Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, bk. xi.

A spirit of change was in the air which showed itself in many ways. In England it expressed itself in a more positive reaction against much that was hollow and artificial in the life and literature of an earlier time. The longing for something natural and genuine became the master passion of the new leaders of thought. Not only does the new love of nature and of man inspire the poetry of Wordsworth and of Coleridge, they are the leaders of a deliberate attack on the artificial poetic manner exemplified in the poetry of Pope. Wordsworth came determined to destroy the old "poetic diction" and set up a simpler and truer manner in its stead. Another but later expression of this longing for what is genuine is found in the works of the great prose writer Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), who fiercely denounced all "shams," railed against the eighteenth century as an era of fraud and unbelief, and preached that men "should come back to reality, that they should stand upon things and not upon the shows of things." In these, and in many similar ways, the period at which we have now arrived was an *era of revolution*. In many spheres of thought and action the old order was changing, yielding place to new.

William Wordsworth, one of the great leaders in this era of change, was born April 7, 1770, at Cocker-  
 mouth, a little village on the river Der-  
 went in the county of Cumberland. His  
 father, the law agent to Sir James  
 Lowther, was descended from an ancient family of  
 Yorkshire landowners, while his mother's ancestors  
 had been among the landed gentry of Cumberland

since the reign of Edward III. On both sides, therefore, the poet came of a family stock deeply rooted in the country soil, and he may well have inherited from this long line of provincial ancestors that sympathy with the country, and with the simple incidents of country life, which is a principal element in his verse. Cumberland, a singularly lovely region of lake and mountain, was then far more remote than at present from the activities of the outside world. Wordsworth was gifted with a wonderful susceptibility to natural beauty, and the serenity and grandeur of his early surroundings entered deep into his life to become the very breath of his being. In his daily companionship with nature he seems to have felt at first a kind of primitive and unreasoning rapture, to be changed in later years for a more profound and conscious love. His more regular education was obtained at Hawkshead School, in Lancashire, and at Cambridge. But college and the fixed routine of college studies failed to touch his enthusiasm, and he is said to have occupied himself before coming up for his degree in reading Richardson's novels. He graduated in 1791, but, as may be supposed, without having distinguished himself. On leaving Cambridge he spent some months in visiting London and elsewhere, finally crossing to France, where he caught the contagion of republicanism, and was on the point of offering himself as a leader of the Girondist party. His relations, alarmed for his safety, stopped his supplies, and in 1792 lack of money compelled his return. On reaching England he found himself with no profession and without definite prospects.



After three years in this unsettled condition he was unexpectedly placed beyond actual want by a timely legacy of £900 from his friend Raisley Calvert, who had discerned in Wordsworth the promise of future greatness, and who wished to make him free to pursue his chosen career. Shortly before this he had made his first public ventures in poetry (*An Evening Walk*, 1793; *Descriptive Sketches*, 1794). After the receipt of Calvert's legacy he took a cottage at Racedown in Dorsetshire with his devoted sister Dorothy, resolved to dedicate himself to poetry. From this time Wordsworth's life was of the most studiously simple, severe, and uneventful description, an example of that "plain living and high thinking" in which he believed. It was lived close to nature, in the circle of deep home attachments, and in the society of a few chosen friends, but it resembled that of Milton in its solemn consecration to the high service of his art, and in its consistent nobility and loftiness of tone. Leaving Racedown in 1797, Wordsworth settled at Alfoxden, near Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, where his genius rapidly developed under the stimulating companionship of his friend Coleridge. Here the two poets worked together, and in 1798 published *The Lyrical Ballads*, a collection of poems to which each contributed. This work, by its deliberate departure from the outworn poetic manner, marks an era in the history of English poetry. It is in his preface to the second edition of this work (published 1800) that Wordsworth made his famous onslaught upon the school of Pope, declaring, among other things, that poetry was not to be made by rules,



but that it was "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." After this Wordsworth worked steadily, holding to his own notions of poetry in spite of the ridicule of the critics and the neglect of the body of readers. In the winter of 1798-1799 he visited Germany. On his return he settled in his native county of Cumberland, living first at Grasmere (1799-1813), and finally removing to Rydal Mount. In 1802 he married his cousin Mary Hutchinson, also a native of Cumberland. Miss Hutchinson, like Wordsworth's beloved sister Dorothy, had a rare appreciation of poetry. He had thus the devotion and sympathy of two gifted women, both capable of entering into his finest emotions and aspirations. The poet, his wife, and sister thus lived in an ideal and beautiful companionship, unfortunately but too rare in the lives of men of genius. Wordsworth's remaining years were passed at Rydal Mount, except when his tranquil existence was broken by short journeys on the Continent or elsewhere. As he advanced in life his work won its way in the public favor. He was made Poet Laureate in 1842, and died peacefully April 23, 1850, as his favorite clock struck the hour of noon.

As a poet Wordsworth was surpassingly great within that somewhat restricted sphere which he has made peculiarly his own. He is deficient in a sense of humor, he possesses but <sup>Wordsworth</sup> as a poet. little dramatic force or narrative skill, and he fails in a broad and living sympathy with the diverse passions and interests of human life. These limitations will always tend to make him the poet of

the appreciative few. To him, indeed, his own words are strikingly applicable :

“ He is retired as noontide dew,  
Or fountain in a noonday grove ;  
And you must love him, ere to you  
He will seem worthy of your love.” \*

Yet he is as truly the poet of the mysterious world we call nature, as Shakespeare is the poet of the life of man. He, more than all other poets, teaches us to enter into that world and find in it the very temple of God, in which and through which He himself will draw close to us.

For Wordsworth's mystical rapture in the presence of the living world is very different from a merely sensuous or æsthetic delight ; it is, in his highest moods, a profoundly religious emotion. In the intensity of his contemplation, his own being is lost in the flood of universal life “that rolls through all things,” and in an ecstasy of aspiration he is “laid asleep in body and becomes a living soul.” † Such a mood, unintelligible to more phlegmatic and commonplace natures, is characteristic of those in whom the apprehension of ideal or spiritual things is exceptionally strong. Plato or Plotinus, the passive Brahmin of the East, or the German *Tauler*, seeks, each in his own fashion, to erect himself above himself by an ecstasy of thought or emotion. “By ecstasy,” said Plotinus, “the soul becomes loosened from its material prison, separated from individual consciousness, and becomes absorbed into the Infinite Intelligence from

\* “ A Poet's Epitaph.”

† “ Lines on Revisiting Tintern Abbey.”

which it emanated." Now to Wordsworth the path of escape from the "material prison," the avenue of access to the "Infinite Intelligence," lay through communion with the informing life in Nature. His assurance that the universe was not a mechanical contrivance, like a huge piece of clockwork, whose motive power was law, but a something divinely alive, is the basis alike of his poetry and his philosophy. This seemingly stolid countryman, with somewhat the aspect of a benignant farmer, recognizes the presence of a sentient life in brook and flower, with the poetic apprehension of the Greek in the dewy morning of the world. He teaches that if we will but pause in our perpetual quest, and let Nature work her will on us, active influences, at work within her, will go out to us.

"Nor less I deem that there are powers,  
Which of themselves the mind impress,  
And we can feed this mind of ours  
In a wise passiveness."\*

In accord with this is Wordsworth's reiterated teaching that nature, and the deep joy in nature, is, or should be, the great formative influence in the life of man. If in youth man lies on the lap of his great Earth-Mother, something passes into his life which later experience, and the worldliness which may come with years, can never "utterly abolish or destroy."† It seemed to Wordsworth that the secret of life was to hold fast youth's generous emotions, its high imaginings, its deep fountains of joy, as an

\* "Expostulation and Reply."

† "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."

antidote to the deadening and contaminating influences of the world. He believed that it was by a consistent fellowship with nature that this precious conservation of our high emotions could best be accomplished. To see again in age some aspect of nature which sank deep into the soul in youth ; to hear again in age that cry of the cuckoo which enchanted us in boyhood, is to revive our youthful rapture, and " beget that golden time again." \* Thus a " natural piety," binding our days each to each, † should inoculate us against the contagion of the world.

Wordsworth celebrates the beauty, harmony, and sublimity of nature ; he is fortified by its calm and its unbroken order ; sustained with eternal hopes by the unwearied renewal of the vernal earth, by the " cheerful faith " that " all which we behold is full of blessings." ‡ But Nature is not all a May day ; she has a harsh and terrifying side, of which Wordsworth was apparently oblivious. He is silent as to her mysterious discords of pain, cruelty, and death. So far as we can tell he is unimpressed by any feeling of her magnificent indifference to man. To this extent his poetry of nature is partial and incomplete. Nevertheless, in this very incompleteness lies one source of Wordsworth's tranquilizing and uplifting power. We are refreshed and sanctified by the very unreservedness of his conviction that the whole world is but the temple of the living God. Of all the poets who in the eighteenth

Limitations  
of Words-  
worth's  
view of na-  
ture.

\* " Lines to the Cuckoo."

† " The Rainbow."

‡ " Lines on Revisiting Tintern Abbey."

century came to lead a rouged and tired generation of intrigue and scandal back to that mother-world to which they had become as strangers, Wordsworth proved himself the greatest and most inspired guide. The murmur of the Derwent,\* the clouds gathered about the setting sun, the splendors of lonely dawns, the solitude of mountain peak and lake and forest, all these things had been his world, and consciously and unconsciously the amplitude and sublimity of that world, extending illimitably about us in its large patience and inscrutable repose, possessed and enlarged his soul. His life rises to the dignity of a great example, because it is so outwardly ordinary and so inwardly exceptional ; because he showed us how to make a new use of those familiar sources of joy and comfort which lie open to all who have eyes to see and ears to hear. His life was severely simple, yet the world was his, even as, up to the measure of our power of receiving, we may make it ours. It is this serene and noble simplicity of Wordsworth's life and character that sheds over certain of his poems an indescribable and altogether incomparable charm. Such short lyrics as "The Solitary Reaper," the poems to "Lucy" or "The Primrose of the Rock," are filled with that characteristic and magical excellence which refuses to be analyzed or defined. Wordsworth's sonnets are among the best in the literature, and his longer poems, such as *The Excursion*, while deficient in compactness and structure, are illumined by passages of wonderful wisdom and beauty. At times, as in those characteristic master-

\*V. *The Prelude*.



pieces, the great companion odes "To Duty" and "On the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," his verse has an elevation and a large majesty of utterance unheard in English poetry since the deep-throated harmonies of Milton. In spite of frequent lapses, Wordsworth's poetic art is of a very high order, and places him with the greatest poets of England.

In a very real sense Wordsworth is the poet of the new democracy, as he is of the new love of nature.

The poet of  
democracy.

The chosen characters of his poems are the simple and hardy peasants of his native Cumberland. Like the good Lord Clifford, in the "Song at the Feast at Brougham Castle," he found love in "the huts where poor men lie." Once it was a canon of literary art that the shepherd-hero should prove to be a prince in disguise, or the charming shepherdess, like Perdita, the lost daughter of a queen. But Wordsworth, speaking for a world that has outworn its feudalism, discards all such adventitious and once necessary means of enlisting our sympathy. "The man's the gowd for a' that," and it is the deep democratic feeling to which we have now grown so accustomed in our modern literature that gives the sorrows of Margaret or of the old shepherd Michael an equal place in the world's heart with the most royal of sufferers, recognizing in such a common humanity consecrated by the dignity of a great grief.

Matthew Arnold, himself a poetic disciple of Wordsworth, has thus summed up the peculiar greatness of his master's work: "Wordsworth's poetry is

great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties ; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.”\*

## STUDY LIST

### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1. ODE ON THE INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD. (a) This is one of the finest among English odes, as well as one of the greatest of Wordsworth's poems. As poetry it has a wonderful nobility and majesty, and, especially in certain stanzas (*e. g.*, IX.), has a lingering grandeur of diction which recalls Milton. It is also of the first importance as an expression of Wordsworth's *teaching*. The artistic success with which it combines philosophy with poetry is worthy of attention from those who, like Keats, contend that they should be kept separate.

(b) *The form of the poem.* The poem belongs to that variety of lyric verse known as the ode, from Greek *ὕδῃ, αἰῖδω*, to sing). Gosse defines an ode as “any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and dealing progressively with one dignified theme.” Odes are usually of complicated and irregular meter, and are commonly divided into stanzas of unequal length. Look up origin and history of the ode, place in Greek literature, etc. Name famous Greek writer of odes, and give some account of him. What are some of the best known odes in English literature? What famous ode was written by J. R. Lowell?

(c) *Study of the poem.* Fundamental idea is found in its title. Stanzas I. to IV. Early sympathy with nature. Does such feeling of nearness to nature commonly exist in childhood? In what other poems does Wordsworth treat of depth of early

\* Introduction to *Selections from Wordsworth*.

impressions of nature, and insist on their importance? What is the exact force of phrase, "apparelled in celestial light"? Cf. "Evening Ode," a poem of Wordsworth's later life, (1818):

"From worlds not quickened by the sun  
A portion of the gift is won;  
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread  
On ground which British shepherds tread."

Cf. Browning's Prologue in "Asolando" which treats of the loss in age of the youthful delight in nature:

"And now a flower is just a flower:  
Man, bird, beast are but beast, bird, man—  
Simply themselves, uncinct by dower  
Of dyes which, when life's day began,  
Round each in glory ran."

The first division of the ode may be said to end with question at conclusion of Stanza IV.

Stanza V. A break in the composition of poem occurred between Stanzas IV. and V. Wordsworth says: "This was composed during my residence at Town End, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the first four stanzas and the remaining part" (*Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, by Christopher Wordsworth, D. D.). The poem was composed partly in 1803 and partly in 1806. What is the connection between Stanzas IV. and V.? For the doctrine of a pre-natal existence Wordsworth went to Socrates and Plato. (Cf., also, ideas in Eastern philosophy on this point, doctrine of metempsychosis, etc.) V. Plato's *Phaedo*, *Meno*, *Republic*, x. 617, etc. Commenting on this portion of the poem, Wordsworth writes: "To that dreamlike vividness and splendor which invest objects of sight in childhood, everyone, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here; but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion which has given pain to some good

and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith as more than an element in our instincts of immortality," etc. (*Memoirs of Wordsworth*) *supra*. Cf., for expression of this feeling of reminiscence of previous existence, Henry Vaughan's "Retreat," given in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, Lowell's "In the Twilight," Browning's "Christina," Tennyson's "Two Voices" (stanza beginning "It may be that no life is found," and those following); last stanza of Hood's "I remember, I remember," etc., also passages in Wordsworth embodying same idea. Stanza VI. treats of conflict between our natural affinity with an eternal sphere, and the earthly and temporal. (In the title of the poem the word "immortal" has rather the force of "eternal." *v.* Richardson's Dictionary.) This is a favorite idea with Wordsworth; cite other passages in which he develops it. Stanza VII. This is simply in illustration of the preceding stanza. Cf., Longfellow's sonnet, "Nature," and contrast Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle II., 275-282. Wordsworth had Hartley Coleridge in mind in this description; *v.* *Memoirs of Hartley Coleridge*, by his brother. Stanza VIII. turns on the question, "Why with such earnest pains," etc., and with it we reach another natural division of the poem. Stanza IX. sets forth the central thought. The soul's reminiscences of a previous state are made the witness to its kinship with an eternal order of things. "Custom" cannot utterly "destroy" this "something" that yet lives in the soul, and high instincts remain which are "the fountain light of all our day." On the corrupting effect of "custom" on the soul, cf. Plato's treatment of the story of the sea-god Glaucus, *Republic*, x. 611 *et seq.* The soul, Plato declares, would become different if she followed her "divine impulse," but "she feeds upon earth and is overgrown by the good things of this life as they are termed," etc. (Jowett's translation.) Stanzas X.-XI. The whole concludes with a strain of assured triumph. The "primal sympathy" with the eternal order, "having been must ever be." "Thanks to the human heart by which we live," etc. Look up and cf. with this "We live by admiration, hope, and love;" cf., also, Browning's *Paracelsus*.



“ Were man all mind—he gains  
 A station little enviable. From God  
 Down to the lowest spirit ministrant,  
 Intelligence exists which casts our mind  
 Into immeasurable shade. No, no!  
 Love, hope, fear, faith—these make humanity;  
 These are its sign, and note, and character.”

—*Paracelsus*, p. 93.

*Cf.* with these two stanzas the earlier and the maturer feeling for nature in “Tintern Abbey”:

“ For I have learned  
 To look on Nature, not as in the hour  
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
 The still, sad music of humanity,  
 Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power  
 To chasten and subdue.”

“To me the meanest flower that blows,” etc. *Cf.* Browning’s “Prologue,” *supra*. Consider this poem as a whole, state into what divisions it naturally falls, point out the connection between the stanzas, and the relation of the thoughts of the whole to Wordsworth’s other work. For the ode in general, consult Theodore Watts’ article on “Poetry” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and note his estimate of the “Immortality Ode” as “the finest irregular ode in the language.”

2. ODE TO DUTY. Compare this poem with the foregoing. On what two helps to right conduct does Wordsworth rely in these two poems? *Cf.* with this “Sonnet on Beach at Calais.”

3. “To the Cuckoo,” “The Reverie of Poor Susan,” “My Heart Leaps Up,” etc., “The Daffodils,” “Three Years She Grew,” etc. What idea have all these poems in common? Explain the connection of this idea with Wordsworth’s philosophy of life.

4. “Lines on Revisiting Tintern Abbey.” “Laodamia,” one of Wordsworth’s few classical poems. What was his



feeling in general toward modern attempts to revive classical subjects? What comment illustrative of this did he make on Keats' *Endymion*? Cf. these two poets on this basis. What Latin poet had Wordsworth been reading before he wrote "Laodamia"? What is the central thought of the poem?

5. SONNETS. "The World is Too Much With Us;" "Milton;" "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1803;" "They Dreamed Not of a Perishable Home;" "Written in London, September, 1802;" "When I Have Borne in Memory What Has Tamed." Give some account of history of sonnet in England before Wordsworth. Can you name any sonnet writers in early part of eighteenth century? Who was William Lisle Bowles?

6. NARRATIVE. "Hart-leap Well," "Ruth," "Michael," "The Brothers," "Rob Roy's Grave."

7. LYRICAL. "The Solitary Reaper," "The Primrose of the Rock," "The Grave of Burns," "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways," "She was a Phantom of Delight," "The Affliction of Margaret," "The Poet's Epitaph," "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned."

8. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Knight's *Life of* (Macmillan), 2 vols., is the most complete. Myer's *Wordsworth*, English Men of Letters Series, is extremely good; see also Lee's *Dorothy Wordsworth*, Field's *Yesterdays with Authors*, Johnson's *Three Americans and Three Englishmen*, Howitt's *Haunts and Homes of British Poets*, Hutton's *Essays in Literary Criticism*. Leslie Stephen's "Essay on the Ethics of Wordsworth," in *Hours in a Library*, third series, is a masterly presentation of Wordsworth's teaching. Matthew Arnold's "Introduction" to his *Selections from Wordsworth*, and J. R. Lowell's essays on Wordsworth in *Among My Books*, *My Study Windows*, and *Democracy and Other Addresses*, are of great value. See also Shairp's *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*, Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature*; also Swinburne's "Wordsworth and Byron," *Nineteenth Century*, April and May, 1884 (also in *Miscellanies*).

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.—1772–1834

Wordsworth lived out his long, blameless, and devoted life under conditions singularly favorable to the full development of his genius. Freed from the pressure of money difficulties, and enabled to live simply amid the loveliest of natural surroundings, happy in his home and in his friends, and blessed with health and energy, he has left us a shining example of a serene and truly successful life. The story of Coleridge, Wordsworth's friend and fellow poet, is tragically different. It is the story of a man of rare and varied gifts, who, from whatever cause, could not, or did not, put forth his powers to the full. Hazlitt has condensed this into one epigrammatic sentence: "To the man had been given in high measure the seeds of noble endowment, but to unfold them had been forbidden him."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the youngest of a large family, was the son of the vicar and schoolmaster at the little town of Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire. Left an orphan in his ninth year, he was admitted to the Charity School at Christ's Hospital, London, and began the unequal fight of life. Here he met Charles Lamb, who has recorded some of their joint experiences in one of his *Essays of Elia*.\* From the first, Coleridge seems to have half lived in a dream-world, created by "the shaping spirit of imagination," which, as he says, "Nature gave me at my birth."† As a little child he wandered over the

\* *Recollections of Christ's Hospital.*

† Coleridge's "Dejection; an Ode."

Devonshire fields, slashing the tops off weeds and nettles in the character of one of the "Seven Champions of Christendom"; and in school at London he would lie for hours on the roof, gazing after the drifting clouds while his schoolfellows played football in the court below; or in the midst of the crowded Strand, he would fancy himself Leander swimming the Hellespont. A hopelessly erratic, inconsequent element runs through his whole life, depriving it of unity and steady purpose. At nineteen he went to Cambridge and furnished his rooms with no thought of his inability to pay the upholsterers; then, under the pressure of a comparatively trifling debt, he gave up all his prospects, fled to London, and enlisted in the Dragoons. He returned again to Cambridge, but left in 1794 without taking a degree. Visiting Oxford in this year, he met the youthful Southey, in whom he found a kindred spirit. Both were feeling that impulse from the French Revolution which was agitating Europe. They agreed that human society should be reconstructed, and decided to begin the reform by establishing an ideal community in the wilds of America. The new form of government was to be called a Pantisocracy, or the government by all, and the citizens were to combine farming and literature. The bent of the two poets at this time is shown by the subjects of their work. They composed together a poem on *The Fall of Robespierre*, and Southey's *Wat Tyler* (1794) is charged with the revolutionary spirit. In 1795 Coleridge married Sarah Fricker, whose sister Edith became the wife of Southey a few weeks later. The pantisocratic scheme

was given up for lack of funds, and Coleridge and his wife settled at Clevedon, on the Bristol Channel. It was about two years after this that he met Wordsworth at Alfoxden, contributing *The Ancient Mariner* to their joint venture, the *Lyrical Ballads*. In 1798 Coleridge left for Germany, where he remained about two years, receiving a fresh and powerful stimulus from the new intellectual and literary life on which that nation had just entered. An immediate result of the visit was a translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, but its effect on Coleridge's tone of thought was profound and lasting. Through him, and afterward through Thomas Carlyle, the influence of German literature began for the first time to tell on that of England.

Coleridge returned to England in 1800. He gave up an excellent opening in journalism to lead a life of quietness and study, settling near Keswick, in Cumberland, a district to which his friend Wordsworth had already retreated. Here he was full of great plans; life seemed growing easier, but his work was interrupted by illness, and to quiet the torments of gout and neuralgia, he unhappily resorted to a quack specific containing opium.

He thus gradually came under the power of this terrible drug, and for the next fifteen years he battled with a habit which was clouding his splendid intellect, and benumbing his energies and his will. To follow this melancholy story is like watching the efforts of some hurt creature struggling in the toils. Estranged from his family, he became, as he writes, "the most miserable of men, having a home and yet homeless."



Finally, under the care of a Mr. Gilman, a surgeon, at Highgate, London, he conquered his fatal habit.

Carlyle, who visited him at Mr. Gilman's, says that he "gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings ; a life heavy laden, half vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment." \* Once, with the sense of power strong within him, he had looked forward to the composition of some mighty works which should adequately express his genius ; now, with so much yet undone, he was beaten and disheartened, tired by the long fight against himself and the world. His health was shattered, his will weakened, while the sense of failure weighed him down. In one of his later poems he pictures himself as listless and inert in the midst of the glad young vigor of the spring, idle while "all nature seems at work" about him, his sadness but deepened by the melancholy sense of contrast. In him the motive power is extinct.

"And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul ?  
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And hope without an object cannot live."

Such poems bring us closer to him than any intrusive words of criticism. *Youth and Age* is even more beautiful in its patient hopelessness and the pathos of its unavailing look backward to a lost youth.

"This breathing house not built with hands,  
This body that does me grievous wrong,  
O'er airy cliffs and glittering sands,  
How lightly then it flashed along—

\* Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.



Naught cared this body for wind or weather  
When youth and I lived in't together."

Now, when "no hope is,"

"Life's a warning  
That only serves to make us grieve,  
When we are old ;  
That only serves to make us grieve  
With oft and tedious taking-leave,  
Like some poor nigh-related guest,  
That may not rudely be dismiss.  
Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,  
And tells the jest without the smile."\*

Hopeless as the sadness of this poem is, it is yet the sadness of a tranquil and quiet acceptance of a great loss. In nothing is the real sweetness and soundness of this man's nature more manifest than in the absence of all taint of bitterness, of peevish complaint or Byronic despair. What he deems his own failure does not prevent his genuine delight in Wordsworth's great achievements. And when at last—as in one of his own poems—Hope and Love, overtaken, at length give way, their mute sister, Patience

"Both supporting, does the work of both." †

When Coleridge wrote his words of regret for the youth and life that seemed to have slipped away from him so fast, the corruptible body was already pressing heavily on the mind that mused upon so many things. Four years later, on July 25, 1834, he was delivered from the burden of the flesh. The world had let him die in his conviction of failure, but no sooner had the

\* Coleridge's "Youth and Age."

† "Love, Hope and Patience in Education."

grave closed over him than England resounded with his praise.

If Wordsworth's was a life lived out in the still, high altitudes of thought, if it was heroic in its simplicity and austerity, it has in it a certain chill that seems to come from its very loftiness and isolation. But Coleridge, with his rare and lovely nature, is perpetually hurting himself against the rough places of an uncompromising world. He is struggling all his life with the crowd, stumbling, and beaten, and disheartened, and by the mysterious law of human suffering, he gains a tenderness that we miss in Wordsworth in spite of all his successes. If Wordsworth has the stimulating vigor of the stoic, Coleridge has the great compassion of the Christian.

For in spite of his inward conviction that he had failed, there is, especially in his later poems, the stillness of a great calm. In Henry Crabbe Robinson's *Diary* there is this significant passage: "Last night he [Coleridge] concluded his fine development of the Prince of Denmark by an eloquent statement of the moral of the play. 'Action,' he said, 'is the end of all; no intellect, however grand, is valuable if it draw us from action and lead us to think and think until the time for action is passed by and we can do nothing.' Somebody said to me, 'This is a satire on himself.' 'No,' said I, 'it is an elegy.'"

Much of Coleridge's work is, like his life, fragmentary and incomplete; yet its range and variety bear witness to the broad scope and many-sided vigor of his genius. He was one of the great English talkers. On every hand

we find testimony to his personal influence upon his distinguished contemporaries. As a converser he held somewhat the same place as that occupied by Samuel Johnson immediately before, and by Thomas Babington Macaulay immediately after him.

In Coleridge's full life the writing of poetry was but one interest, even perhaps a somewhat incidental one. His discursive energy spent itself in philosophy, in theology, in political journalism, and in criticism. He strove to infuse into the common sense and materialistic English philosophy, the more ideal and spiritual character of contemporary German thought. He was the most profound and philosophic critic of his time. His *Biographia Literaria* contains an exposition of Wordsworth's poetic principles, greatly superior to that put forth by that poet himself. His lectures on Shakespeare began an era in the history of English Shakesporean criticism.

Coleridge left but little poetry. Much of this is scrappy and unfinished, and no small proportion is obviously inferior in quality to his best poetic work. He seems to have required peculiar conditions for poetic composition; inspiration came to him suddenly, in mysterious gusts, but often before a poem was finished it as suddenly left him, apparently, as powerless as an ordinary mortal to complete what none but him could have begun. Thus, after writing the second part of *Christabel*, a poem born of the very breath of inspiration, he waited vainly until the end of his life for the return of the creative mood. He tells us that when writing

*Kubla Khan*, a poem which came to him in his sleep as a kind of vision, he was interrupted "by a person on business from Porlock," and that on his return he was unable to complete it. He concludes with the pathetically characteristic words: "The author has frequently proposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. *Ἀὐριον ἄδιον ἄσσω*; but the to-morrow is yet to come."

We should rather attribute the smallness and incompleteness of his poetic work to some defect of character or purpose, some outside limitation which clogged the free exercise of a great gift, than regard it as the result of any flaw in the quality of the gift itself.

While in mere bulk his contribution to poetry is comparatively small, its intrinsic value outweighs all the ponderous mass of poor Southey's laborious epics. When Coleridge's genius works freely and under favorable conditions, we are captivated by a music that places him with the lyrical masters of the literature, and impressed by the sense of his absolute originality of tone. His descriptions of nature are often condensed and vivid, like those of Dante, showing the power to enter into the spirit of a scene and reproduce it with a few quick strokes:

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;  
At one stride comes the dark."\*

In some poems, indeed, he seems to follow in the track of Wordsworth, but in *Christabel*, *The Ancient Mariner*, and *Kubla Khan*, he stands alone. There have been many poets of the supernatural; but

\* *The Ancient Mariner*.

one province of the land of visions Coleridge rules as his demesne, and

“ Within that circle none durst walk but he.”\*

*The Ancient Mariner* is connected with that revival of interest in native ballad poetry which was one phase of romanticism. Not only is  
 “ *The Ancient Mariner.*” it a ballad in form; it is filled with those ghostly and mysterious elements which, in a cruder shape, enter so largely into the folk-song and legend of primitive superstition. Such elements were congenial to certain writers of the romantic school, both in Germany and England, representing as they did the “Renaissance of Wonder,”† the reaction against the matter-of-fact and rational spirit of the preceding period. In both *The Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* the ghostly and the horrible lose much of that gross and physical terror which the ordinary literature of superstition is content with calling forth. Coleridge’s more subtle art brings us into a twilight and debatable region which seems to hover between the unseen and the seen, the conjectural and the real. He invests us with nameless terrors, as when we fear to turn because of a fiendish something that treads behind.

We are also to observe the skill with which this supernatural element is woven into a narrative of possible incidents, so realistically told as fully to persuade us of their truth. By such means Coleridge has carried out his professed object, and almost

\* “Prologue to the *Tempest*.”—Dryden.

† The phrase of Theodore Watts.



deluded us into a temporary belief in the whole story.

Coleridge has thus created a new thing out of the crude materials of vulgar superstition, but in doing this he has employed other agencies than those already named. In his shadowy world, as in that of Hawthorne, we are haunted by the continual suggestion of some underlying moral significance. How far we should attempt to confine the spiritual suggestiveness of *The Ancient Mariner* within the limits of a set moral is open to question. To do this may seem to some like taking the poem out of its twilight atmosphere to drag it into the light of common day. Yet we can hardly fail to feel that Coleridge has here written for us the great poem of *charity*, that "very bond of peace and of all virtues" which should bind together all created things. It is against this law of love that the mariner sins. He wantonly kills a creature that has trusted him, that has loved him, that has partaken of the sailors' food and come at their call. The necessary penalty for this breach in the fellowship of living things is an exclusion from that fellowship. His "soul" is condemned to dwell alone, until by his compassion for the "happy living things" about the ship—by the renewal of that love against which he has sinned—he takes the first step toward his return into the great brotherhood of animate creation. For *hate*, or wanton cruelty, is the estranging power which, by an inevitable law, forces a man into spiritual exile, just as *love* is the uniting power which draws together all living

The moral  
significance  
of the poem.

things. The very power to pray depends upon our dwelling in this mystic fellowship of charity, and in the poem praying and loving are constantly associated. (See verses 14 and 15 in part iv., also 22 and 23 in part vii.)

The underlying meaning in this becomes apparent in that verse which gives us the completest statement of the thought of the poem :

“ He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small ;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.”

The last couplet gives us the reason for the declaration contained in the first. Not only is love the bond between all *created* things—it is the bond also between the Creator and his creatures. It is the mysterious, underlying principle of creation because it is the essence of its Creator, and an outcast through his violation of love here is no longer able to approach the source of all love. For the loneliness of the mariner does not consist in his loss of human sympathy merely ; he seems to drift on that strange sea of isolation almost beyond the power of the Universal Love :

“ So lonely ’twas that God himself  
Scarce seemèd there to be.”

Looked at from this aspect, *The Ancient Mariner* becomes the profoundest and perhaps most beautiful expression of that feeling of sympathy for all living things which we have found uttering itself with

increasing distinctness in later eighteenth-century literature.

But Coleridge's place as a poet is far from resting entirely on his poems of the supernatural. Like Wordsworth, although not perhaps so instinctively and habitually, he sees in nature the outward manifestation of a divine energy, and God is the "all-conscious presence of the Universe." But he realizes, as Wordsworth did not appear to do, that to each man nature is but what his mood or his power of spiritual apprehension makes her. To the dulled or jaundiced eye the world is obscured or discolored; we endow nature with that joy which is within our own souls, or darken her fairest scenes with the pall of our sorrow, so that we receive from her "but what we give."\* In the philosophical element of Coleridge's maturer poems we recognize the influence of that idealistic thought of contemporary Germany which was but the philosophic form of the rebound from the materialism of an earlier time.

As he watched the promise of the French Revolution depart in the license and frenzy of the Reign of Terror, Coleridge, like Wordsworth and Southey, abandoned his youthful hopes As poet of man. for a settled conservatism. Burke had written at the opening of the Revolution "that the effect of liberty to individuals is that they may do what they please; we ought to see what it will please them to do before we risk congratulations

\* "Dejection; an Ode." For this view of nature see this poem and contrast it with Wordsworth's "Expostulation and Reply."

which may be soon turned into complaints."\* Seven years later, during which he had looked on at the murderous riot of a nation from which all external forces of control had been suddenly withdrawn, Coleridge reaches in his "France" a similar conclusion. He sees that true liberty must rest upon obedience to a moral law, that the only foundation for the improvement of society is the improvement of the individual, without which a so-called liberty may but hand men over to the tyranny of evil habits and desires.

"The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,  
Slaves by their own compulsion. In mad game  
They burst their manacles and wear the name  
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain."†

In this conviction, that liberty is obedience to the highest, Coleridge is one with Wordsworth and with John Ruskin, the daring and impassioned social reformer of our own day.

## STUDY LIST

### COLERIDGE

1. POEMS OF THE SUPERNATURAL. (a) *The Ancient Mariner*. For accounts of the way in which the poem came to be written, sources of the story, etc., v. *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, by Christopher Wordsworth, D. D.; Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xiv.; Hales' *Longer English Poems*, notes on *Ancient Mariner*; Brandt, *Life of Coleridge*, p. 179.

Why did Coleridge write "*It was an Ancient Mariner*," rather than "*There was*," etc.? Cf. opening of "*Friar of Orders*

\* Burke, *Reflections on French Revolution*.

† Coleridge, "France; an Ode."

Gray," "Wreck of the Hesperus," etc., etc. Give other examples of use of this form. Why should a wedding guest have been selected by Coleridge as the person to hear the Mariner's story? Point out any points of connection between *The Ancient Mariner* and certain contemporary social or literary conditions. What sentiment has the poem last mentioned in common with the following: Wordsworth's "Hart-leap Well"; Burns' "To a Mouse," and "On Scaring Some Water-fowl," etc.? Cite other poems, written in or before this time, expressing this same sentiment, and give contemporary instances which show its presence outside of literature. Find passage in Coleridge's "Wanderings of Cain," where the bond of fellowship between man and the animals is broken by the entrance of sin. In what novel of Hawthorne's is this situation strongly brought out?

Has *The Ancient Mariner* any definite purpose? Discuss idea of its meaning suggested on p. 278 *et seq.*, and look up similar or other interpretations.

(b) *Christabel*; v. Brandl's *Coleridge*, p. 206 *et seq.*

(c) *Kubla Khan*. Discuss Coleridge's general treatment of supernatural in above poems. Cf. use of supernatural in old ballads, as "The Master of Weemyss," Motherwell's *Ancient Minstrelsy*, i. 176; treatment in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, etc.; German Romantic ballads, etc., etc.

2. POEMS RELATING TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. *Destruction of the Bastille*. *To a Young Lady, with Poems on the French Revolution 1792*; *France, an Ode*. Cf. poems of Wordsworth and others relating to same subject.

3. PERSONAL AND LYRICAL. "Youth and Age;" "Complaint and Reply;" "Work Without Hope;" "Dejection: an Ode."

4. PROSE POEM. *The Wanderings of Cain*.

5. FOR COLERIDGE'S PROSE, the reader is recommended to Professor H. A. Beers' *Selections from the Prose Writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Henry Holt & Co.

6. LIVES OF COLERIDGE. Cottle's *Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey* is written from the standpoint of personal intimacy.



Traill's *Coleridge*, English Men of Letters Series, and Caine's *Coleridge*, Great Writers Series, are good lives.

Johnson's *Three Americans and Three Englishmen*, Lowell's *Democracy and Other Addresses*, and Brandl's *Coleridge* may also be consulted. *Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a Narrative of the Events of his Life*, by James Dykes Campbell, is the latest work on the subject (1894).

#### SIR WALTER SCOTT, 1771-1832

The new interest in the Middle Ages, and in the ballad poetry and folk-song of England, finds its greatest interpreter in both the poetry and prose of the author of the Waverley Novels, who remained for so long a time "The Great Unknown."

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771. He took a genuine pride in the fact that he came of "gentle folk," and traces, in his *Autobiography*, his lineal descent from that ancient chief, Auld Watt of Harden, "whose name I have made to ring in many a Border ditty, and from his fair dame, the Flower of Yarrow; no bad genealogy for a Border Minstrel." \*

His father, for whom Walter was named, was by profession a Writer to the Signet (attorney). His mother was Anne Rutherford, daughter of a distinguished physician of Edinburgh. Walter seems to have been a most engaging child, and a great favorite with his elders, who were ready to tell him the stories of local legend in which he delighted.

\* See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. i. chap. i. Consult also *Lady of the Lake*, cant. v. verse 7, supposed to be a description of Scott's border ancestry.

He thus came to know the past of his country as he only knows it who learns it, not from books, but from the rural depositories of tradition. So Darsie Latimer, in *Redgauntlet*, heard from the lips of Wandering Willie the marvelous tales of his ancient house.

Much of Scott's childhood was spent in the country at Sandy Knowe, and here he was in familiar intercourse with the country people. He sat at their firesides, listening to scraps of old ballads and quaint songs, stories of Border feuds and Scotch superstitions, anecdotes of the great risings of 1715 and 1745. He thus laid, deep in his wonderful memory, the foundations of that knowledge which he was to put into the best setting.

By his genial and embracing sympathy, he, as it were, was able to absorb Scotland herself, the outward aspect of her valleys, glens, and lochs, her towns, her fishing villages and hamlets, her people's life, her history, spirit, and tradition, and lift them, by the simple force of his imaginative and poetic art, into the unchanging region of literature.

Scott was admitted a member of the faculty of advocates in 1792. He obtained the office of Sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire in 1799, and in 1806 that of clerk of the session in reversion. He entered upon the emoluments of this last in 1812, and from that time was in receipt of an income of £1600 a year from these two offices. He discharged these duties for twenty-five years with great fidelity, and the income therefrom enabled him to make of literature "a staff and not a crutch," as he was fond of saying. But, be the motive what it may, we can scarcely

imagine more constant and rapid work than Scott accomplished during the period between January, 1805, the date of the publication of *The Lay of The Last Minstrel*, and 1831, the year in which he wrote the last of his great series of novels. From 1825, when money difficulties came upon him, he worked tremendously to clear himself from debt. The story of this struggle is a very familiar one, and its full details have become clearer to the world since the publication, in 1890, of Sir Walter's *Journal*. No one can read the private record of that brave fight, saddened by domestic loss, by failing health, yet courageously maintained until the last, without being moved to a depth of reverent admiration and affection for Scott's own personal character; without amazement at his marvelous power over himself and over his pen. At last the struggle ended. After his return from a Continental tour, taken in the vain hope of restoring health to mind and body, he died peacefully in his home at Abbotsford, September 21, 1832, surrounded by his children and faithful dependents. He was buried in Dryburgh Abbey.

Scott possessed in a remarkable degree the rare power of grasping life, as it were, with the bare hand; of learning by a shrewd insight into men's lives, and by a healthy fellowship with Nature in all her moods. With this faculty, he had the gift of telling what he saw. In English literature, Chaucer had this power, Spenser had not: Shakespeare is the supremest instance of it in any literature, while in Milton it is comparatively absent.

Scott's  
work.

The distinctive features of the poetry of Scott are ease, rapidity of movement, a spirited flow of narrative that holds our attention, an out-of-doors atmosphere and power of natural description, an occasional intrusion of a gentle personal sadness ; and but little more. The subtle and mystical element, so characteristic of the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge, is not to be found in that of Scott, while in lyrical power he does not approach Shelley. We find instead an intense sense of reality in all his natural descriptions ; it surrounds them with an indefinable atmosphere, because they are so transparently true. Scott's first impulse in the direction of poetry was given him from the study of the German ballads, especially Bürger's *Lenore*, of which he made a translation. As his ideas widened, he wished to do for Scottish Border life what Goethe had done for the ancient feudalism of the Rhine. He was at first undecided whether to choose prose or verse as his medium, but a legend was sent him by the Countess of Dalkeith, with a request that he would put it in ballad form. Having thus the framework for his purpose, he went to work, and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was the result.\* It became at once extremely popular, and we are told that "Scott was astonished at his own success." This decided him to make literature his profession, and by 1813 he had published *Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and

As a poet.

\* Coleridge's poem of *Christabel* was the immediate inspiration of this poem. Scott says, "It is to Mr. Coleridge I am bound to make the acknowledgment due from a pupil to his master."



*Rokeby*. The battle scene in *Marmion* has been called the most Homeric passage in modern literature, and his description of "The Battle of Beal an Duine," in *The Lady of the Lake* is an exquisite piece of narration from the gleam of the spears in the thicket to the death of Roderick Dhu at its close. In the deepest sense Scott is one with the spirit of his time in his grasp of fact, in that looking steadily at the object, which Wordsworth had fought for in poetry, and which Carlyle has advocated in his philosophy. He is allied, too, to that broad sympathy for man which lay closest to the heart of the age's literary expression. Wordsworth's part is to inspire an interest in the lives of men and women about us; Scott's, to enlarge the bounds of our sympathy beyond the present and to people the silent centuries. Shelley's inspiration is hope for the future; Scott's is reverence for the past.

Scott wrote twenty-three novels in fourteen years. He wrote them during the faithful discharge of the duties of his profession, among the pressure of business anxieties, and in spite of all, found time for the exercise of a most charming and open-hearted hospitality to all who sought his friendship. He may be said to have created the historical novel. Fielding and others had excelled in the portrayal of daily life and manners, and, as we have already seen, there were writers who had attempted in fiction the romantic and the marvelous, but only Shakespeare himself had so reanimated historical characters with the spirit of life and action that they seem to be once more in living presence among us.

**As a novelist.**



Scott stands alone in that branch of literary work. Others have made, it may be, one great success in the novel of history ; such as Thackeray in *Henry Esmond*, George Eliot in *Romola*, and Robert Louis Stevenson in *The Master of Ballantrae* ; but Scott has brought alike the times of the Crusaders and of the Stuarts before us ; he has peopled the land of Palestine and the hills of Scotland, the forests of England and the borders of the Rhine, for our edification and delight. Paladin and peasant, earl and yeoman, kings and their jesters, bluff men-at-arms and gentle bower maidens, all spring into life again at the touch of the "Great Enchanter." How bare would be our mental pictures of Queen Elizabeth were we deprived of the scenes in *Kenilworth* in which she stands before us alive forever in her wrath, as Leicester's injured queen, or yielding to those more womanly touches of feeling as she listens to the sympathy of her women or of her "Cousin Hunsdon." The wonderful charm which the unfortunate Queen of Scots had for all who approached her would be harder to realize were it not that, as we read *The Abbot*, we too succumb for a while to its power, and feel that, with Roland Graeme, we could die for her, right or wrong. There is no doubt that Scott is often historically inaccurate. He takes liberties, as did his great master Shakespeare, with place and with facts ; but he has the power to humanize for us the people about whom he writes ; he puts a spirit and a soul into the dry facts of history, and gives them by his imagination the very breath of life. History alone hardly helps us to realize the burning

zeal felt by the Crusaders for the recovery of the Holy Sepulcher, or the general detestation of the Jew in England, as elsewhere on the Continent. We must go to *The Talisman* and *Ivanhoe* to learn what it was to journey with Kenneth and Saladin over the desert ; to feast as did the Black Knight with Robin Hood in Sherwood Forest, and to feel our hearts thrill with the outlaws as we do homage to Richard of the Lion Heart. But it is not only in the field of history that the "magic wand" has power. In the novel of simple daily life, in a time nearer to Scott's own day, he is perhaps even happier in his vivid pictures. Nowhere has he more touchingly portrayed the life of Scotland's people than in *The Heart of Midlothian*, that story so dear to Scottish men and women. Here Scott touches both extremes ; the Queen and the Duke of Argyle, and the lowly peasant maiden, strong in her cause and in her truth ; and what a picture is their meeting !

When we review, therefore, the enormous range and the high average excellence of Scott's work in fiction, and remember the ease and rapidity with which it was produced, we feel that he exhibits a creative force rare even among the great geniuses of the literature.

Scott's sense of humor was keen, and his own enjoyment of it cannot be doubted. Many scenes in *Redgauntlet*, *The Antiquary*, or *Old Mortality*, are full of genuine fun ; and the character of Caleb Balderstone, in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, is unsurpassed of its kind.

Scott works in the primary colors. He is not in-

tense, he does not question deeply, or analyze motives. He does not excel in that morbid anatomy of emotion which has become the fashion with many novelists of this present age of so-called superior culture and advanced ideas. He thinks that life is good, and that there is wholesome enjoyment to be gained from action. He admires honor and courtesy and bravery among men, and beauty and gentleness and modesty among women. The greatness and the goodness of Scott must ever appeal to us, the charm and glow of his verse delight us. The *Waverley Novels* are the splendid witness of the breadth, sympathy, and purity of one of the great creative intellects of our literature, worthy, indeed, of a place among the immortals, side by side with Chaucer and nearest to the feet of Shakespeare himself.

### Summary.

## STUDY LIST

### SIR WALTER SCOTT

[The reader of Scott requires neither lists of recommended works nor helps to study; any right-minded person does not need encouragement, he will simply go on and enjoy. It is almost equally unnecessary to obtrude any list for school purposes; the chief difficulty being the great wealth from which to select. A few poems are, however, given as among the most appropriate; the novels will probably be relegated, at any rate, to outside reading.]

1. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Marmion, The Lady of the Lake.*

2. SHORTER POEMS. "Cadyow Castle," given with notes in Hales' *Longer English Poems*. The songs may be picked out from the poems and taken as a separate study, or see *The Lyrics*

and *Ballads of Sir Walter Scott*, edited by Andrew Lang. [The editor's Introduction is most spirited and delightful.]

3. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, 3 vols., and *Scott's Journal*, are the best authorities; the short lives of Scott are unsatisfactory. Carlyle's *Essay on Scott* may be read as much for the light it throws on Carlyle's limitations as for its view of Scott, which in places is open to serious criticism. See also Oliphant's *Literary History of England*, and Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry*, pp. 133, 194.

#### CHARLES LAMB.—1775–1834

Charles Lamb—called by Coleridge the “gentle-hearted Charles” \*—was born in London, 1775. He was the youngest of three children; his family were in poor circumstances, his father being little more than a servant to a Mr. Salt of the Inner Temple. From his eighth to his fifteenth year, Charles studied as a “blue-coat boy” at Christ's Hospital, and here there sprung up between him and his fellow-student Coleridge a friendship which proved lifelong. On leaving school he obtained a clerkship in the South Sea House, and two years later in the India Office. His father's health failed, and Charles became the chief support of the little family. But the quiet of their household was soon broken by a terrible event. Mary, Charles Lamb's sister, was seized with violent insanity, and killed their mother (1796). Mary was taken to an asylum, where she recovered, and Charles procured her release on his becoming responsible for her guardianship.

\* See Coleridge's poem, “This Lime Tree Bower my Prison,” in which several references to Lamb occur.



Thenceforth, after his father's death, he devoted himself to the care of his afflicted sister. For intervals, which he called "between the acts," they lived quietly in the most devoted companionship, Mary aiding in her brother's literary work, and presiding at their little receptions, which Coleridge and sometimes Wordsworth attended. Then, again, Mary would "fall ill," and return for a time to the asylum.

Through all this strain and distress, and occasional fears for himself, Lamb's cheerful and loving nature saved him from bitterness and despair, and he found courage to work. He lived his "happy-melancholy" life, and died quietly at London in 1834. His sister, whose name is forever linked with his as the object of his care and partner of his literary work, survived until 1847.

In spite of daily work in the office, and of his domestic troubles, Lamb found time and heart for literature. As a boy he had spent many odd hours in the library of Mr. Salt, "browsing chiefly among the older English authors"; and he refers to Bridget Elia (Mary Lamb) as "tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading." This preference for Elizabethan writers endured through life, and their style and mode of thought became in some degree natural to himself. His first venture was a contribution of four sonnets to a book of poems on various subjects by his friend Coleridge (1796). After some minor works, he published *John Woodvil* (1801), a tragedy on the early Elizabethan model, which was severely criticised, and



later a farce, *Mr. H*—— (1806), which failed on the first performance.

His *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who Wrote about the Time of Shakespeare*, with notes, aroused new interest in a great body of writers then largely neglected, and showed Lamb himself a critic of keen natural insight, his suggestions often being of more value than the learned notes of commentators. Thus Lamb, with William Hazlitt, another critic of the time, helped in bringing about that new era of criticism in which Coleridge was the chief mover. In 1807 appeared *Tales Founded on the Plays of Shakespeare*, the joint work of himself and his sister Mary. Lamb is best known, however, by his essays, first published, under the name of *Elia*, in the *London Magazine* (founded 1820). Written for the most part on trivial subjects, with no purpose but to please, they bring us close to the lovable nature of the man, full, indeed, of sadness, but full, too, of a refined and kindly humor, ready to flash out in a pun, or to light up with a warm and gentle glow the cloud that overhangs him. In these essays we see Lamb's conservative spirit and hatred of change. His literary sympathies lay with the past, and he clung with fondness to the memories of his childhood.

## STUDY LIST

### CHARLES LAMB

1. ESSAYS OF ELIA. The following essays have been selected as among the most enjoyable and characteristic: "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," "The Two Races of Men," "The Old and the New Schoolmaster," "Valentine's

Day," "Modern Gallantry," "Dream Children; a Reverie," "Distant Correspondents," "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig," "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People," "Captain Jackson." Show from the above essays Lamb's fondness for the past, and his kind-heartedness. What do you learn from these of his own life? Name which you consider the finest of the character sketches among them. How do you think these essays compare with those of Addison?

2. CRITIC AND POET. "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," "Hester," "The Old Familiar Faces." Compare the spirit of this characteristic poem with that shown in certain of the *Essays of Elia*.

3. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Talfourd's *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb*, Ainger's *Lamb*, English Men of Letters Series; *Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Ainger, two volumes.

#### THE LATER POETS OF THE REVOLUTION

The appalling plunge into murder and anarchy which followed hard upon the triumph of the Revolutionists in France, shocked into a sudden sobriety much of the vague enthusiasm for the cause of man. Thousands who, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, had joined in the contagious outcry for liberty and equality, recoiled like them in disgust from a revolution which had brought the dregs of society uppermost, and cast to the surface man's primitive baseness and cruelty. In France the towering genius and ambition of Napoleon were hurrying the nation back into despotism; in England, the government set its face against sorely needed reforms, through an unreasoning fear that change might prove the invitation to a Reign of Terror. Yet the Revolution had none the less begun a new epoch in the history of England and of the Continent; in spite of the efforts of conservative governments, its fires

still smoldered everywhere beneath the surface, ready at a breath to burst into flame. After the battle of Waterloo (1815) the great powers of Europe met at Vienna and entered into a compact known as *The Holy Alliance*. The ostensible object of this alliance was to promote peace and good will ; its real purpose was to crush the spirit of democracy. It would have blotted the Revolution out of history, by reviving that older Europe which, in reality, no congress could restore. Austria, under her Prime Minister Metternich, threw her whole weight on the side of absolutism ; but demonstrations among the students in the German universities (1817), insurrections in Spain and Naples, and the heroic struggles of the Greeks under Turkish oppression, showed that the revolutionary spirit was unextinguished.

England was passing through a critical period of popular distress and dangerous discontent. On the one hand a government set in its conservatism ; on the other a people unsettled by new industrial conditions, impoverished by over-taxation, impatient to gain a voice in their own government, and brought at length by poor crops to the verge of actual starvation. The assembling of the people for free speech was pronounced illegal, and at a great meeting at Manchester, the cavalry charged upon the crowd, and answered their petitions for a vote in Parliamentary elections with the edge of the sword (1819). A year later a conspiracy was formed to murder the members of the Cabinet.

Four poets—Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Thomas Campbell, and Thomas Moore—all born

during the last quarter of the preceding century, express in greater or less degree the spirit of this time. Each was, in his way, a poet of the Revolution, a lover of liberty, a believer in progress. When Wordsworth and Coleridge sang their first pæans to Liberty, her white robes were still stainless, her fame unspotted. The poets of this younger group in their early manhood had looked on at the crimes committed in her name; they had breathed in an atmosphere heavy with the sense of failure; they were confronted with an oppression and misery calculated to make them embittered and rebellious.

In some respects, Lord Byron, in the power and brilliancy of his genius, in his audacious and dramatic personality, thrusts himself forward as the most truly representative poet of this time. We see in his life and character and work a rebellious arraignment of life, a passionate, impotent complaint against the entire order of things.

George Gordon Byron was born in London, January 22, 1788. The same year saw the birth in Germany of Arthur Schopenhauer, destined to be the great preacher to modern times of a philosophy of despair. The Byrons, or Buruns, were thought to be descended from a Scandinavian settler in Normandy. The family had come into England with the Conqueror. They were a fighting race; we find them in the field at Crécy, at the siege of Calais, at Bosworth, at Edgehill. Ungovernable and proud, the spirit of the Viking seemed to survive in them; and after long generations they produced a poet. Byron reminds us of the hero in some

**Byron.**



Greek tragedy, born to a heritage of guilt and suffering. His granduncle, "the wicked lord," was convicted of manslaughter and, like some of his nephew's miserable heroes, was cast out from human society. The father of the poet, Captain John Byron, known as "Mad Jack," was a profligate and heartless spendthrift; his mother, Catherine Gordon, who traced her descent from James I., was a silly and impulsive woman, subject to furious paroxysms of temper. Having squandered his wife's fortune, Captain Byron left her in greatly straitened circumstances, shortly after the birth of their son. The worse than fatherless child was thus left wholly at the mercy of an injudicious and passionate woman, who treated him, according to her passing whims, with alternate harshness and over-indulgence. Under these wretched conditions Byron's life began. He grew up a spoiled child, passionate, headstrong, sullen, and defiant. On all this was piled yet another misery—he was lame, owing to the deformity of one foot; and to his vain and morbidly sensitive nature this misfortune was a life-long torture. In 1798, by the death of "the wicked lord," he succeeded to the title and family estates. In 1801 he entered Harrow, where he was noted as a fighter, and acted as ringleader in a boyish rebellion against the authorities. Four years later he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he led the life of the idle and dissipated undergraduate. Here his "gyp," or college servant, spoke of him with respect as "a young gentleman of tumultuous passions." In 1807 he published his first book of poems, *Hours of Idleness*. An unfavorable review



of this youthful venture, which had in reality but little merit, aroused his passionate temper, and he struck back fiercely in a satire on *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). Revolutionist as he was by nature, Byron had a deep and genuine appreciation of the historic greatness of Europe, and after two years of Continental travel (1809-1811), he gave the world the splendid record of his impressions in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* (1812). The result was one of the most sudden and memorable successes in English literary history; in his own familiar phrase, Byron awoke one morning and found himself famous. The poetic star of Scott, who had been enchanting the world with his vigorous ballads of romance and chivalry, declined before the brightness of this new luminary. The public turned from tales of Border warfare, from the mailed knights and moated castles of mediævalism, to enter under Byron's guidance the unfamiliar regions of the East. *The Giaour* (1813) is the first of a succession of Eastern tales, in the meter of Scott, each of which increased the fever of popular enthusiasm. In these tales the Byronic hero, first outlined in *Childe Harold*, reappears under different names and varying disguises, with significant persistence in all his solitary, joyless, and misanthropic personality.

In 1815 Byron married Miss Milbanke, but after about a year they separated for reasons not fully known. The public turned furiously upon the man it had so lately idolized, and overwhelmed him with its sudden condemnation. Smarting under a sense of injustice, Byron left England forever, pursued

across Europe by the outcry against him. After spending some time at Geneva under the stimulating influence of Shelley, he settled at length on the "Waves of the Adriatic, like the stag at bay who betakes himself to the waters." During this time he wrote with extraordinary power and rapidity, producing, among a great number of other poems, the remaining cantos of *Childe Harold*, *Cain*, *Manfred*, and *Don Juan*. At length he seemed to weary of poetry, as he did of everything, declaring that he did not consider it his "vocation," but that if he lived ten years, he was determined to do something in new fields. His ardent and invincible spirit found the way. He threw himself into the cause of the Greeks, then struggling against Turkish despotism, and in 1823 chartered a vessel and sailed from Genoa in their aid. He reached Missolonghi, and was made commander-in-chief of an expedition against Lepanto. But the presentiment of his approaching death was upon him. On his thirty-sixth birthday, while yet at Missolonghi, he composed some verses which seem touched with the spirit of prophecy :

"If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*  
 The land of honorable death  
 Is here. . .  
 Then look around, and choose thy ground  
 And take thy rest."

Death would not spare him for the soldier's grave he coveted. He was stricken with illness before he could take the field, and died at Missolonghi, October 19, 1824. In his delirium he imagined that he was leading his Suliotes at Lepanto, and cried out "For-

ward, forward, follow me!" At length, as the last lethargy settled down upon his untamable and restless spirit, he said quietly to his attendant, "Now I shall go to sleep." He did not speak again.

The life and work of Lord Byron were an immense force not only in the history of England but throughout Europe. His generation hailed him as the voice of their aspirations and com- **Byron's work.** plaints. He uttered for them, in verse of an indomitable and masculine vigor, full of a somewhat declamatory but magnificent rhetoric, their iconoclasm, their despairs, their unbeliefs; and he shares in both their weakness and their strength. Probably no other English poet ever won such admiration from contemporary Europe; he gave English literature a larger place on the Continent, and in Mazzini's words, "led the genius of Britain on a pilgrimage throughout all Europe." \* But while realizing the importance of Byron in the large movement of democracy as a social and political force, our primary question is rather as to the permanence and value of his contributions to literature. The world has moved rapidly away from the thoughts and tastes of Byron and of his day, but it is the distinction of the great poets to express not their own time merely, but that which is common to all times. Has Byron done this? Even when judged by the most liberal standards, it must be admitted that Byron's poetry does not possess in any great measure that "great antiseptic" a high excellence of style. He is dashing, brilliant, unequal, effective, but careless of finish and detail even to an occasional

\* Essay on "Byron and Goethe."

slip in grammar. The movement of his verse is nervous, strong, and free, but Shelley surpasses him in subtle lyrical quality, and in his inspired instinct for the aptest word. Yet we forget these shortcomings in his immense vitality and ease, and when fairly caught in the rapids of his eloquence we are borne along by the power of the orator joined to the power of the poet. In satire, by *The Vision of Judgment* and *Don Juan*, he towers above the other moderns as the successor of Dryden and of Pope. He has a feeling for large results; his descriptions are bold, broad, and telling, and the historic past of Europe lives in his swelling lines. He is the poet of the mountain-peak, the sea, and the tempest. A contempt for his fellow-men mingles curiously with his love of nature and her solitudes. Unlike Wordsworth, he does not efface himself in her presence, but finds a congenial spirit in her moods of fierceness and of power.

For the rest, Byron's life and work are the memorial of his imperious and colossal egotism. His demands on life were enormous, his disappointments correspondingly severe. Napoleon would have made the world minister to his lust of power; Byron, to his lust of pleasure. *I myself would enjoy, yet I suffer*: this is the sum of his arraignment of life. He could create but one type of hero, because he could not escape from the tyranny of his own personality. His heroes never learn of suffering, they stand solitary in the midst of the sufferings of a world in the insatiate egotism of their own woes, sullen and defiant until the last. There is a sublimity in the



inveterate opposition of the individual will to the impassive fatality of things ; but in Byron this is weakened by the strain of selfishness, and at least a suspicion of insincerity. For Byron's romantic unhappiness and mad dissipations were more conducive to popularity than Wordsworth's placid contentment and sobriety. Yet while we may be uncertain as to how much of Byron's demonstrative despair was "playing to the gallery," his devotion to liberty at least was genuine. He could exclaim while others doubted :

" Yet Freedom ! yet, thy banner, torn but flying,  
Streams like a thunderstorm *against* the wind." \*

His faith in freedom glows in his verse, and lends a parting and consecrating radiance to his unhappy life. But his conception of freedom is shallow and unregulated ; he confuses it with the license to every man to do what shall seem good in his own eyes. "I have simplified my politics," he writes, "into an utter detestation of all existing governments." His heroes are, for the most part, desperate men, in reckless revolt against the social and moral laws. Haughty, unyielding, self-centered, they are rather the foes to society than its saviors. Selim, in *The Bride of Abydos*, boasts of his love for freedom ; but by freedom he means the unchecked license of the buccaneer, free to sail where he will, with a thousand swords ready to destroy at his command. Byron is without a real social faith ; impatient to pull down, he is powerless to lay hold on any rational or helpful

\* V. this passage, *Childe Harold*, canto IV. Stanzas xcvi.-xcviii.



law of life for himself or for others. He fails to see, with Ruskin, that anarchy is eternally a law of death, to realize Wordsworth's joy in the submission to the highest. His *Cain*, in which the deepest and most serious side of his nature found expression, is the direct antithesis of Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*. It is the pathos of such a life as that of Byron that it brings its own revenges. His mad revolt against things as they are becomes, as he grows older, but more furious and bitter, until it reaches its brilliant but terrible consummation in *Don Juan*.

The want in Byron's poetry lies deeper than any mere defect in manner. So far as it fails to present any reasonable and well-considered view of life; so far as it fails to be ennobling, helpful, and inspiring, just so far does it lack elements which make for permanence. For Byron himself, where we cannot admire, it is easy to pity and to excuse. Carlyle once likened him to a vulture, shrieking because carrion enough was not given him; he was rather a caged eagle, who in impotent protest beat out his life against the bars. The contest told even on his audacious energy. Young as he was he could write, "The dead have had enough of life; all they want is rest, and this they implore." He would have two words put over his grave, and no more: *Implora pace*. The fascination of Byron's personality, the sadness of his story, will enshrine the memory of the man, a strong and tragic figure; while by many a poem, and still more by the superb vitality of many a brilliant passage, he has secured a lasting place among the poets of his country.

## STUDY LIST

## LORD BYRON

*The Prisoner of Chillon*; "There's not a Joy the World Can Give;" *Childe Harold* [Cantos III. and IV.]; selections from Byron in *Ward's English Poets*; "Lines on Completing His Thirty-sixth Year;" "She Walks in Beauty, Like the Night."

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Nichol's *Byron*, English Men of Letters Series; Moore's *Life of Byron*, 2 vols. Swinburne's "Essay on Wordsworth and Byron" in his *Miscellanies* is brilliant and interesting. See also Matthew Arnold's Introduction to his "Selections from Byron" in *Essays in Criticism*, second series; John Morley, "Byron" (in *Miscellanies*, vol. 1); Macaulay, "Byron" in *Essays*; Mazzini, *Byron and Goethe*.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) stands with Byron as a poet of revolt; but his devotion to liberty is purer, his love for man readier to declare itself in deeds of help and sympathy, his whole life ennobled by loftier and more unselfish aims. In Byron we may see the masculine element of revolt audaciously interrogating earth and heaven, deficient in reverence and in faith, instant to destroy; in Shelley rather a feminine unworldliness, erring through its incapacity to adjust itself to the ways of earth; we see in him a theorist and a dreamer, building in the air his shimmering palaces of clouds until he "falls upon the thorns of life." Trelawney describes him as "blushing like a girl" at their first meeting, and speaks of his "flushed feminine and artless face."\* Strong yet slender in figure, with

Shelley.

\*Trelawney's *Recollections of Last Days of Shelley and Byron*, p. 26.

sensitive, almost girlish face, with deep blue poet eyes, and a mass of wavy brown hair, early streaked with gray, Shelley in our imagination moves among other men as one apart. A daring independence of mind distinguished him from the first. It was his nature to accept nothing on the authority of others, but rather to question and prove all things for himself. He dreamed of what the world should be before life had taught him what it was, and in the fervor of his ideals of truth and righteousness, in his "passion for reforming the world," \* —young and confident, but too often hasty and mistaken,—he found himself misunderstood and at issue with the world. At Eton, where he was sent in 1804, he was solitary, shy, eccentric ; he did not join in the cricket or football, and was commonly spoken of by the boys as "Mad Shelley." The petty tyranny of the fagging system moved him to protest, and he set on foot a conspiracy to suppress it. In his school-days, in one of those sudden flashes of prophetic insight that sometimes illuminate the spirit in early youth, his ideal of life came to him with strange distinctness. He tells us how he then made this resolve. weeping :

"I will be wise,  
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power ; for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannize  
Without reproach or check." \*

\* Dedication to *The Revolt of Islam*.

To a temperament so ardent, lofty, and ill-fitted for conformity to the routine thought and usage of ordinary men, life was certain to prove but a hard matter at best, and Shelley's youth was passed under conditions which, for such a nature as his, were peculiarly unfortunate. His father, Sir Timothy Shelley, a country gentleman in Sussex, was the embodiment of commonplace and prejudiced conservatism ; limited and bound by the habits and traditions of his class, it was inherently impossible for him to understand his son's character or tolerate his aims. Shelley's loving and loyal nature made him susceptible to influence, but his fiery zeal and independent temper would not brook authority, and any attempt to compel him to act against his convictions aroused in him the spirit of the martyr. His conflict with authority came but too soon. His active mind, prone to doubt and to inquire, hurried him into skepticism, and in 1811 he was expelled from Oxford, which he had entered five months before, for a pamphlet *On the Necessity of Atheism*. Shortly after quitting Oxford, he married Harriet Westbrook, a mere schoolgirl, who had excited his pity and sympathy, and who was decidedly his inferior in social position. Sir Timothy, who had been seriously provoked by his incomprehensible son's disgrace at Oxford, was naturally incensed anew by this act of folly, and the two young creatures—Shelley was but nineteen and his girl-wife three years younger—were cast adrift. After an interval, a small allowance was granted to them by Sir Timothy and Harriet's father, and they wandered from place to place, Shelley



absorbed in his theories, his poetry, and his projects for reclaiming the world. *Queen Mab*, a notable though immature production, was the work of this time, and was privately printed in 1813. Toward the close of the same year Shelley and his wife separated, and after her death in 1816 he married Mary Godwin, who proved herself more capable than the unfortunate Harriet had been, of giving his complex and delicately poised nature the sympathy and help he longed for. William Godwin, Mary Godwin's father, was a theoretical reformer, who preached the peaceable abolition, through the pure force of reason, of law, government, and religion, and Shelley, who had previously felt an enthusiastic admiration for his teachings, was now brought into closer relations with the advocate of these extravagant doctrines. He had thus, on the one hand, broken with authority and custom, by his expulsion from Oxford and his breach with his father, and on the other he had surrendered himself, in his impulsiveness and immaturity, to the guidance of a man who expressed the sweeping and unscientific notions of social reform then current among extremists. *Alastor* (1816), Shelley's next poem, in which he describes the lonely wanderings and death of a poet who pursues the unattainable and ideal beauty, discloses to us the springs of Shelley's own nature. Like Marlowe, Shelley was possessed by the "desire for the impossible," and his insatiable and buoyant spirit mounts into regions where we cannot follow. In the nobility of its verse and the beauty of its natural descriptions, *Alastor* shows a great advance in poetic power, and from this



time the splendors of Shelley's genius steadily disclose themselves. In his next poem, *The Revolt of Islam* (1818), he poured out those hopes for the regeneration of the world, which are a vital force in his life and poetry. Shelley was less blindly destructive, less hopeless than Byron. He saw that the disappointment which succeeded the failure of the Revolution had "unconsciously found relief only in the willful exaggeration of its own despair,"\* and he wrote *The Revolt of Islam* in the belief that mankind were "emerging from their trance."\* His hero, Laon, is not a Lara or a Manfred, lost in selfish gloom and misanthropy, but a poet-prophet, aspiring after excellence, who falls a willing martyr to his love for men. In contrast to Byron's chaotic despondency, the poem strikes anew the note of hope and prophecy; it suggests to us that the interval of doubt and depression is passing; it proclaims a social faith. Mankind is to be saved by Love, and in the poem "Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world."\* The whole poet-world of Shelley is transfigured and glorious in the radiance of this faith. The doctrine of *The Revolt of Islam* was but reiterated in one of the noblest of his poems, the lyrical drama of *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). There we see Prometheus, the type of humanity, or of the human mind, chained to the precipice by Jupiter, the personification of that despotic authority which clogs man's free development. The hour of liberation is at hand. Asia, the

\* Preface to the *The Revolt of Islam*. The passage first quoted apparently refers to Byron.

incarnation of that ineffable ideal which Shelley sought, the "light of life," and "shadow of beauty unbeheld," journeys to meet Prometheus. Jupiter is overthrown, the rule of despotism broken. Prometheus unbound is united to Asia, that is, the mind of man is wedded to its holiest aspirations, and the world enters upon the reign of universal love.

"Love from its awful throne of patient power  
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour  
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,  
And narrow verge of crag-like agony springs,  
And folds over the world its healing wings."\*

So in the closing chorus of *Hellas* (1821), a drama inspired by the Greek war for independence, the poet's vision sees in the coming Golden Age the return of "Saturn and of Love."

"Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
But votive tears and symbol flowers."†

In spite of his professed opinions, Shelley is in this poem one of the most intensely Christian of English poets. In Mrs. Shelley's words he had "an exceeding faith in the spirit of Christianity," and he went about among men the embodiment of love and pity, the helper of the helpless and the poor.

In 1818 Shelley left for the Continent, traveling and writing among the most beautiful scenes. A number of poems composed in the year following show the deep effect produced upon him by the news

\* V. the speech of Prometheus to Asia, act iii. scene 3, and the beautiful lyric "Light of Life, thy Lips Enkindle," act ii. scene 5.

† *Hellas*.

of the Manchester massacre \* and by the thought of the oppression and misery at home. Among these are *The Masque of Anarchy*, in which Murder appears as Lord Castlereagh and Fraud as Lord Eldon, with its passionate appeal to the people to rise against their oppressors; "England in 1819," and "The Song to the Men of England." In these poems the democratic sympathies of Shelley take a passionate and distinctly practical form. The brief space between 1818 and his untimely death in 1822 is the period of Shelley's greatest work. Year by year the fullness of his genius was revealing itself. He had learned of life and of suffering; his faith was deepening, his mind maturing through experience and incessant study. He was becoming a more consummate master of his art. That labyrinthine profusion of fancy and imagery, which dazzles and confuses us in many of his earlier poems by its very splendor and excess, is chastened and restrained in his later songs, which stand pre-eminent among the most exquisite creations of lyric art. But English poetry was to suffer a sudden and irreparable loss. In 1822, while sailing on the Gulf of Leghorn, Shelley was caught in a squall off the Via Reggia and perished. So swiftly and so terribly did that breath of the Eternal, whose might he had invoked in song, descend upon him. †

Criticism can do but little toward helping us to an appreciation of Shelley's character and work. We dare not attempt by any cold analysis to reach the secrets of a nature so intricately and exquisitely fash-

\* V. p. 296, *supra*.

† V. last stanza of *Adonais*.

ioned ; to apportion praise and blame, or to reconcile real or apparent contradictions. He was denounced by his contemporaries for acts and opinions which were rightly considered immoral and hurtful to the order and happiness of society. No admiration for Shelley should lead us to think lightly of his faults or blind us to their disastrous consequences. How far he was morally responsible for erroneous principles sincerely held we need not here inquire ; what we should realize is that his wrong actions were in conformity with what he himself believed to be right. To be just to him we must identify ourselves, for the time, with his view of life. We must realize also the nobility of many of his aims, his childlike purity and innocence, which shrank back pained and perplexed at the defilements of the world.

Shelley's poetry, like his nature, must be known through sympathy rather than through criticism. No English poet is more remote from those tangible facts of life which daily engross us, none has fewer points of contact with the average mental state of the average man. Like his Skylark, Shelley mounts from the earth as a cloud of fire ; and his song reaches us from blue ærial heights. If we have an answering touch of his nature, if we have it in us to leave the ground, we shall be caught up likewise into those luminous and unfathomable spaces where he sings. To understand Shelley, we must recall those moments when some deep feeling has shaken the dominion of the ordinary in us, when the familiar has grown strange to us and the spiritual near, or perhaps when



a vague desire for a something unguessed has possessed us: then, if we imagine those feelings intensified a hundredfold, we are within sight of the confines of Shelley's world. This, indeed, is more particularly applicable to his larger and more difficult works, as *The Witch of Atlas* and *Epipsychidion*; many of his shorter and more familiar poems are free from obscurity, yet full of Shelley's peculiar magic. In his purely lyrical faculty, his power to sing, Shelley is perhaps without a parallel in English poetry.

## STUDY LIST

### PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1. *Adonais*. Given in Hales' *Longer English Poems*, with notes. Cf. note on *Lycidas* and the elegy in the Milton Study List. Cf. also Moschus' *Lament for Bion*, and Bion's *Lament for Adonis*—the latter translated by Mrs. Browning. Do you think Shelley expresses in this poem a belief in personal immortality? If not, what is the teaching of the poem on this point.

2. *The Sensitive Plant*; *Alastor*.

3. SHORTER POEMS. *The Skylark*, see Keats Study List, § 2; *The Cloud*; *Ode to the West Wind*; *Arethusa*; *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*; *Stanzas written in Dejection, near Naples*; *Mont Blanc*; *Lines written in the Vale of Chamouni* (cf. Coleridge's *Mont Blanc*); *Mutability, a Lament* (v. Wordsworth Study List, on loss of early feeling for nature, § 1, c); *One Word is too often Profaned*. In studying Shelley as a lyric poet the reader should turn, in addition to the above, to the choruses in *Prometheus Bound* and *Hellas*. Note particularly the "Light of Life, thy Lips Enkindle" from the former, and the last chorus from the latter of these two poems.



4. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, 2 vols., is the standard work on the subject. Shelley's life has been written for the Great Writers Series by William Sharp, and for the English Men of Letters Series by J. A. Symonds. Essays on the *Prometheus Unbound*, by Vida D. Scudder, *Atlantic Monthly* for July, August, September, 1892, are interesting and suggestive.

John Keats (1795–1821) contrasts strongly with the two young poets just considered. He is no revolutionary spirit, he has no new social theories to put forth ; he does not trouble himself with the questions of the day, nor employ his art in idle complaints, nor in useless efforts at reform. An absorbing love of beauty, comparable to that of Spenser, is his most marked characteristic. His verse lacks the manly, if somewhat careless strength of Byron, the sincere if mistaken conviction of Shelley ; but it possesses, in its best examples, an almost unrivaled perfection of form and beauty of expression. His taste turned naturally to classic Greece ; he leaves the unlovely world about him to live among gods and heroes, and to tell of their passions in his own delicious verse. One of these classic studies, the unfinished poem *Hyperion*, is remarkable for the majestic beauty of its blank verse, the finest of its kind since Milton, whose epic manner it somewhat resembles. He delights also in the romance of the Middle Ages ; he is a student and disciple of Spenser ; and these influences are seen in such poems as *Isabella, or The Pot of Basil*, founded on a story of Boccaccio, and *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

Keats may be regarded as definitely representing

the value of form and sweetness of expression—of beauty as beauty—in English verse. In this respect some of his work, such as his *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, has never been surpassed, and may be regarded as almost perfect. He has of necessity left but few examples of his best, but much that shows the promise of a genius yet unfolded. If, as some think, his poems are often too luxuriant and sensuous, without restraint, and wanting in deeper thought, we must remember his feeble health, and his death from consumption at twenty-six. While we may not agree with Matthew Arnold in saying that “no one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats,” yet none can fairly limit the possibilities of his life by the work of his sickly youth.

Keats, with his love of beauty as yet passionate and unrestrained, delighting chiefly in the graceful flow and music of sweet words, has given us verse which sometimes cloy; the later Tennyson, with a love less passionate but not less real, restrained and guided by maturer judgment, clothes his more noble thought in verse whose beauty does not weary us.

## STUDY LIST

### JOHN KEATS

1. THE EVE OF ST. AGNES. This is given, with notes, in Hales' *Longer English Poems*, who refers to Chambers' *Book of Days*, and Ellis Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, for account of the popular superstition on which the poem is founded. Keats represents both romanticism and the revival of classicism in poetry. This poem is one of those that show mediæval sym-

pathies. What great English poet, for whom Keats had a deep admiration, has evidently influenced Keats in this poem ?

2. SHORTER POEMS. *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Contrast the spirit of this poem with that of the preceding. Cf. with Stanza II. Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables*. *Ode to a Nightingale*. Cf. Shelley's *Skylark*. Which of these two poems shows the loftier and more unselfish spirit ? Cf. also other poems to the skylark, including those of Wordsworth, Hogg, and William Watson ; *Bards of Passion and of Mirth* ; *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*.

3. SONNETS. *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* ; *Keen Fitful Gusts are Whispering Here and There* ; *To One who has Been Long in City Pent* ; *The Human Seasons*.

4. BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Colvin's *Keats*, English Men of Letters Series ; Rossetti's *Keats*, Great Writers Series ; *Letters of John Keats*, edited by Sidney Colvin ; Lowell's essay on " Keats " in *Among My Books*.

## CHAPTER II

### RECENT WRITERS.—1830

THE year 1830 may conveniently be regarded as the beginning of the latest literary epoch of England. Not only did many of the great authors who stand as representatives and exponents of the Victorian age, begin to write in or about that year, but many surrounding conditions in society or 'in thought which have helped to give form and color to their work, then began to impress themselves upon the tone of literary production. It is never easy to select, out of the complex and multifarious life of a time, those particular social conditions or current modes of thought which have done most toward giving to the literature of the epoch its special note or personality. But in dealing with a past epoch at least some of our difficulties have been removed by the mere lapse of time. Rightly or wrongly, time has selected for us what we must assume to be the leading characteristics of the period. The confusion of innumerable voices has long ceased, thousands of daily happenings have passed out of mind, and the meaning and due relations of great events have grown more clear. Keeping in mind the obstacles to our gaining a just and comprehensive idea of that time to which we may be said to belong, we must try to understand its general meaning and personality, so far as our nearness to it will permit.

We can detect three forces at work in the life and thought of recent England, which have been potent factors in the contemporary literature :

- (1) *The advance of democracy.*
- (2) *The general diffusion of knowledge and of literature.*
- (3) *The advance of science.*

These are not separate but interdependent forces ; each has acted on the others, and their combined influence has done much to determine the distinguishing spirit of our epoch and its literature.

*The advance of democracy.* By the year 1830 the conservative reaction which had followed the meeting of the Congress of Vienna, had given way before a fresh outbreak of the revolutionary spirit. In this year the Bourbon king, Charles X., was driven by the liberals from the throne of France. The event awakened in Germany a responsive agitation, and the progress of democracy in Europe, which had but suffered a temporary check, was resumed. In England this tendency showed itself in changes so radical that they constituted in fact a peaceable and legal revolution. The period of prophetic anticipation, the period of disappointment and oppression, were past, and the nation entered upon an era in which the ideas of democracy were to be actually put into practice through a series of important reforms.

For centuries the landholding class had governed the country and monopolized the government offices. Many people were also excluded from a share in political power by reason of their religious views.



By successive acts many of these religious disabilities were removed, dissenters and Roman Catholics permitted to hold certain town and government offices, and by the Emancipation Bill (1829) Romanists were allowed to sit in Parliament. Still more momentous was the overthrow of the political supremacy of the landowner. The passage of a Reform Bill in 1832 extended the franchise to the middle class, which during the industrial and commercial growth of the past century had increased in wealth and importance; and by this and other changes Parliament became more directly representative of the people's will. A second Reform Bill in 1867 admitted the working class to a share in political power, while a third and still more sweeping act in 1884-1885 still farther extended the right of suffrage. Within half a century the real governing power in England has thus been peaceably transferred from an exclusive upper class to the great bulk of the nation. William IV. found England practically an oligarchy. Victoria will leave it an almost unadulterated democracy. The widespread results of this transference of power are matters of history. It has tended to weaken class distinctions, to better the condition of the working class, and to give increased opportunities for popular education. It has been clearly related to that great growth of the reading public and those wider means for the spread of knowledge which are so intimately connected with the literature of the time. The social changes and agitations of which these Reform Bills are but a part are certainly one of the greatest

features in the history of our time. It has been said that "The most impressive thing in Europe to-day is the slow and steady advance of the British democracy."\* Thus that wider human sympathy which we saw spring up and increase during the eighteenth century, uttering itself with gathering power and distinctness in a long succession of poets from Thomson to Shelley, has taken in our time an increasingly definite and practical form.

But these reforms have been far from satisfying many who long for a yet more radical change. The philanthropic efforts of Robert Owen (1771-1858) in behalf of the factory operative and the poor were followed toward the middle of the century by the Christian socialism of Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) and Frederic Denison Maurice (1805-1872), and later (in 1860) by the new economic teachings of John Ruskin (b. 1819), the importance of whose work as a social reformer is but beginning to receive due recognition. Labor on its part has banded itself together in organizations which have become a distinctive feature in our modern society, and on every side there are signs of expectancy and social unrest. These aspirations and uncertainties have written themselves in the pages of the literature. They are echoed in our poetry; they have been a great formative influence in the novel, the distinctive literary form of the day, either directly, from Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) to Besant's *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882), and Mrs. Ward's *Marcella* (1894), or in less obvious and more subtle ways.

\* V. Rae's *Contemporary Socialism*.

2. *The more general diffusion of knowledge and literature.*

The more general diffusion of education, the prodigious multiplication of cheap books and reading matter in every conceivable shape, is closely related to the democratic spirit of society and to the advance of applied science. Education, like political power, is no longer monopolized by an exclusive class; the readers are the people, and reading matter, if not literature in the stricter sense, is now produced by them and for them. This reading public has been widening since the days of De Foe and Addison. The early years of the eighteenth century gave birth to the periodical essay, and many of the great English newspapers—*The Morning Chronicle*, *The Times*, *The Morning Post*, *The Morning Herald*, founded during the last quarter of that century—began that wider influence of journalism which is one of the features of the present time. The rising literary importance of these great journals during the latter eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is illustrated by the fact that Coleridge, Lamb, Thomas Campbell, and William Hazlitt, a noted English literary critic, were among their contributors. Newspapers have rapidly multiplied during the present century, and their circulation has enormously increased with the removal of the stamp and paper duties which were formerly levied upon them, and with the improved mechanical means for their production.\* “A preaching Friar,” wrote

\* “In 1827 there were 308 newspapers published in the United Kingdom, of which 55 were in London. In 1887 the

Thomas Carlyle in 1831, "settles himself in every village and builds a pulpit which he calls a newspaper; therefrom he preaches what momentous doctrine is in him, and dost thou not listen and believe?" Through the pages of his *Weekly Register* (established 1815) it was possible for William Cobbett, the son of a day-laborer in Surrey, to become one of the most powerful political writers of his time. The opening of the present century saw the introduction of another important agency in widening the power of literature, in the foundation of the great reviews. *The Edinburgh Review*, an organ of Whig or Liberal opinions, was started in 1802, nearly a century after the foundation of *The Tatler*. This provoked the establishment, in 1809, of *The London Quarterly*, which came forward as an advocate of opposite political views. Among the reviews and periodicals that followed were *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817, *The Westminster Review* in 1824, and two weekly papers of a high order, *The Athenæum* and *The Spectator*, in 1828. These magazines had the support of many of the ablest and best known writers of the day, and many of them were immensely stimulating to the public interest in literature. Even the partisanship and ferocity of some of the book-reviews were not actually without good result, as they tended to promote literary discussion. Thus Francis Jeffrey, the first editor of *The Edinburgh*, pronounced his sentence of condemnation on the number of newspapers published in the British Islands is given at 2125; 435 of which are published in London." V. Ward's *Reign of Victoria*, vol. ii. p. 509.



poetry of Wordsworth ; Coleridge defended his friend's poetic principles in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) ; Wordsworth himself stated them in prefatory essays to his poems. Hazlitt, Lamb, Southey, De Quincey, and Walter Savage Landor were writing during these early years of our century on books and writers past and present, so that the time may be thought of as a *period of literary criticism*. But literature and knowledge were passing even beyond these limits to leaven the poorer and more ignorant strata of society.

A literature more especially devoted to the cause of popular education became important about the time of the first Reform Bill. Men like Charles Knight (1791-1873), the brothers William and Robert Chambers, George L. Craik, and Samuel Smiles consecrated their lives and energies to this work, the importance of which it is not easy to over-estimate. In the year of the passage of the Reform Bill (1832) two cheap magazines were established. The first of these, *The Penny Magazine*, was established in London by Charles Knight ; the second, *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, was started quite independently by the Chambers brothers. Both of these were enormously popular, the former reaching a circulation of two hundred thousand copies at the end of a year. Besides cheap and good periodical literature, there were penny cyclopedias, cheap editions of good authors, and the beginning of those means for the diffusion of literature and knowledge which are now so familiar that we are apt to forget their true significance. By the legislative provision



for popular education (Foster Education Act, 1870), and by private enterprise, Victorian England has shown her deep sense of the duty and the necessity of a general education. Carlyle spoke in the best spirit of the time when he declared, "If the whole English people, during these 'twenty years of respite,' be not educated, . . . a tremendous responsibility before God and man will rest somewhere."\*

3. *The advance of science.* Science, which has attracted to its service a large proportion of the intellectual force of the time, has conspicuously affected the life of modern England in two distinct ways. First, by its application to directly practical ends it has wrought a revolution in the material conditions of civilized life. So far as his physical surroundings are concerned, the civilized man of to-day lives in a new earth which science has created for him. And second, by its researches into the history and nature of things, by theories which touch upon the problems of man's origin and destiny, science has been a disturbing or modifying element in almost all contemporary thought, and in almost every department of intellectual activity. In brief, it has both transformed life and altered our conception of life; it has done much to change the aspect of the world without, and it has penetrated the life of the very soul within.

Many of those important changes in the outward conditions of daily life which have followed the practical application of science to life, date from about that period which we have fixed upon as the begin-

\* *Past and Present*, bk. iv. ch. iii.

ning of the present literary era. In 1830 the Liverpool and Manchester Railroad went into operation, and six or seven years later a great period of railroad construction began. The first electric telegraph in England was erected in 1837, the year of Victoria's accession, and steam communication with the United States was begun in the following year. These new means of locomotion and transportation, like those new means of production which immediately preceded them, have helped to create the modern spirit, the note of personality which marks the time. The facilities for quick and easy intercourse meant the further breaking down of old barriers between town and country, between section and section; they meant the lessening of provincialism or ignorant prejudice, and they meant the opportunity for the transmission of newspapers and of news; so in this, as in many other ways, modern science came as an ally of modern democracy. On the other hand these changes have rudely broken in upon seclusion and contemplation; modern industrialism, with its railroads and factories, has made the world uglier; intenser competition and greater chances of money-making have made man more selfish and sordid. Wordsworth lived to lament the invasion of the peaceful retirement of his beloved Cumberland by the railway and the tourist.

“The world is too much with us, late and soon,”

at least twice a day it gets itself recorded in print, and insists upon thrusting in our faces the catalogue of its latest crimes and scandals. It is as though we lived in the street,

“Jaded with the rush and glare  
Of the interminable hours,” \*

and were unwilling or unable to take sanctuary in the dimness and coolness. All this has tended to foster in us that feverish haste and activity, that desire for the new thing, however ignorant we may be of the old, which seems hardly conducive to the creation of enduring masterpieces of literature. “Wherever we are, to go somewhere else ; whatever we have, to get something more ;” these, according to Ruskin’s caustic aphorism, are the moving desires of the modern world.

The second effect of the advance of science, its modification or disturbance of thought or belief, is also to be taken into account in our study of recent literature. The year 1830, which witnessed a triumph of applied science, was also productive in purely scientific investigation. Sir Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology* (1830), expanding men’s imaginations by its revelation of the vast extent of earth’s past, was one of the first of those many books of science which, during the last half century, have combined to modify some of our fundamental ideas of life. This book, says Professor Huxley, “constituted an epoch in geological science,” and also prepared the world for the doctrine of evolution. This last named theory of the beginning and the law of life, put forth by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace in 1859, steadily forced upon those who accepted it a wholesale readjustment of their ideas

\* *The Buried Life*, Arnold.

comparable to that which the discovery of Copernicus forced upon our forefathers. It struck at the root of men's conceptions of existence; its influence reached far outside the ranks of the specialist, into the whole world of thought, moving men to utter again the old cry :

“ Ah me, ah me, whence are we or what are we ?

In what scene the actors or spectators ? ”

With new problems and aspirations, social, scientific or religious ; with a world that seems to move with an ever-accelerating rush and swiftness ; our literature has been heavy-laden with the burden of our seriousness and our complaining. The childlike lightness of Chaucer's England, the young energy of Shakespeare's, the shallow flippancy and finical polish of Pope's, all these have passed. In Arnold's magnificent and melancholy lines, the England of to-day is

“ The weary Titan, with deaf  
Ears and labor-dimmed eyes.

Bearing on shoulders immense  
Atlantean, the load  
Well-nigh not to be borne,  
Of the too vast orb of her fate.” \*

This is the England whose voice is heard in our Victorian literature.

The new conditions of life and thought which thus took rise in England in about the year 1830, found about that time a group of young writers capable of interpreting them. By that year the extraordinary outburst of poetic genius which began during the closing years of the

The new era  
in literature.

\* “ Heine's Grave.”

preceding century had spent its force. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey still lived, indeed, but their work was done ; while the recent and untimely deaths of Keats, Shelley, and Byron had made a sudden gap in English poetry. Scott was nearing the end of his gallant struggle with adversity, holding to his work with unflinching tenacity, but with failing body and mind. Into the firmament thus strangely left vacant of great lights, there rose a new star. It was in 1830 that Alfred Tennyson, the representative English poet of our era, definitely entered the literary horizon by the publication of his *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Macaulay and Carlyle, two writers who were to occupy a large space in the prose of the opening era, had entered literature a few years before the advent of Tennyson ; and immediately after his coming many of the other great writers of the epoch crowd in quick succession. The next decade sees the advent of Robert Browning (*Pauline*, 1833) ; Elizabeth Barrett, afterward Mrs. Browning (*Prometheus Bound*, 1833) ; Charles Dickens (*Sketches by Boz*, 1834) ; William Makepeace Thackeray (*Yellowplush Papers*, 1837), and John Ruskin (*Salsette and Elephanta*, 1839).

It is not easy to form any general conception of the literary period thus begun. The sixty years which make up the Victorian era have been years of immense literary activity and productiveness ; many, and often conflicting, elements have found expression in them, and even in this comparatively short space, so rapid has been the movement, so fierce and unrelenting the pressure of the time, that successive phases of thought



or style have followed each other with confusing swiftness. The general features of the Victorian literature will grow clearer to us through a study of some of those authors who represent its diversified activity.

The practical and prosperous temper of an England that sixty years ago seemed entering upon a period of solid comfort and prosperity, is reflected in the work of the brilliant **T. B. Macaulay.** essayist and historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859). From his first publication, an essay on *Milton* in the *Edinburgh Review*, 1825, Macaulay's career was one of unbroken and well-deserved success. Few writers have brought to their work more enthusiasm for literature, or more patient industry ; few have ruled over a wider range of reading, or collected a store of information as diversified and exact. Macaulay was the born man of letters. Before he was eight he was a historian and a poet; having compiled a *Compendium of Universal History*, and written a romantic poem, *The Battle of Cheviot*. From the first he was an insatiable reader ; from childhood he began laying up in his prodigious memory those ever-accumulating stores which were to constitute his magnificent literary equipment. His nurse said "he talked quite like printed books," showing a command of language which greatly amused his elders. When he was about four, some hot coffee was spilled on him while out visiting with his father. In answer to the compassionate inquiries of his hostess he replied : "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated."\*

\* Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, i. p. 40.

As Macaulay grew to manhood his juvenile tastes were turned into solid requirements, and there is something substantial and well-rounded in the life built on these good foundations. He was successful as statesman and as author. He was courted and admired in the most distinguished circles ; and his wide reading, his phenomenal memory, his brilliant conversation, sparkling with spoils from many literatures, helped to make him a social and literary leader. He thoroughly enjoyed the world and the age in which he found himself; finding it full of substantial comforts, and a sensible and rational progress. England with her ever-lengthening miles of railroads, with the smoke of her thousand factories, with her accumulating gains, delighted him with her tangible and visible successes. But to his shrewd and practical intelligence the spiritual hungers and alternations, the mysterious raptures and despairs of finer and more ethereal natures, must have seemed wholly unintelligible. After reading Wordsworth's *Prelude* he writes in his diary : " There are the old raptures about mountains and cataracts ; the old flimsy philosophy about the effect of scenery on the mind ; the old crazy mystical metaphysics ; the endless wilderness of dull, flat prosaic twaddle ; and here and there fine descriptions and energetic declamations interspersed." \* Macaulay felt, to use his own oft-quoted phrase, that " an acre in Middlesex is better than a principality in Utopia." The very soul of genius looks out at us through Shelley's dreamy and delicate features ; we know where his principality

\* Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ii. p. 239.

lies. Carlyle thought once, as he looked unobserved at Macaulay's sturdy, blunt features, with their traces of Scottish origin, "Well, anyone can see that you are an honest, good sort of a fellow, made out of oat-meal."\* In truth Macaulay was as naturally and happily in accord with the average sentiment of the mass of men about him, as Shelley was out of tune with it; and his ability, unlike the mystical power of Shelley, differs from that of the average man less in kind than in degree. Not only has such a temperament a better chance of happiness than a more ideal one; not only is it better fitted for worldly success; in Macaulay's case it was this very glorified commonplaceness which qualified him for the great work he had to do. Robust, upright, manly, un-ideal, it was easy for the growing reading public to understand him, and to these popular qualities he added wide scholarship and a style of absolute clearness, of captivating movement, and unwearied brilliancy. We cannot wonder that Macaulay, following close on those means for widening the sphere of literature already noted, should have become to the growing circle of readers the great popular educator of his time. His essays, covering a great range of subjects, brought history and literature to the people through the pages of the magazines. India came home to them in his *Clive* and *Hastings*; Italy in his *Machiavelli*; England in his *Chatham*; literature in his *Milton* and his *Johnson*. The comparative compactness with which these subjects were handled, the impetuous rush and eloquence of the style, their

\* Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, i. p. 23.

picturesqueness, richness, their sparkling antithesis, took the public by storm. And Macaulay has still another qualification as a missionary of learning; he was, in Lord Melbourne's neat phrase "cock-sure of everything." Such confidence hardly indicates power of the finest order, but none the less it is often grateful to untrained minds, which qualification and reservation tend to confuse. As an English writer \* says, in an admirable bit of criticism on this point: "uninstructed readers like this assurance, as they like a physician who has no doubt upon their case."

The great work of Macaulay's later years was his *History of England from the accession of James II.* On this task he concentrated all the fullness of his powers: he brought to it a high standard of excellence, an infinite capacity for taking pains, a marvelous style, and the loving labor of a lifetime. More than a century before, Addison had declared that through *The Spectator* he would bring philosophy out of the closet, and make it dwell in clubs and coffeehouses. Macaulay, who is to be associated with Addison as accomplishing a similar work on a far larger scale, wrote before the publication of his *History*, "I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." † The immense sale of his book, absolutely unprecedented in a work of this character, is overwhelming testimony to Macaulay's position as a popularizer of knowledge. "Within a generation of its first appear-

\* Rev. Mark Pattison.

† Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ii. p. 327.



ance," writes his biographer, "upward of one hundred and forty thousand copies of the *History* will have been printed and sold in the United Kingdom alone," while according to Everett no book ever had such a sale in the United States, "except the Bible and one or two school-books of universal use."\* We should be careful to estimate the importance of Macaulay's work at its full value; we should appreciate the soundness and manliness of his life and character; we should realize his peculiar significance at a time when literature was becoming more democratic. At the same time we should feel that, great as his gifts were, they were not of the highest order; excellent as his aims were, they were not the loftiest nor the most ideal. If we compare the two famous essays on Johnson, the one by Macaulay and the other by Carlyle, we shall perceive that the first is the brilliant, graphic production of a capable and highly trained man of letters; that the second has the penetrative insight, the more exquisite tenderness of the man of genius.

In passing from Macaulay, the versatile and accomplished man of letters, to Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), the great man whose Titanic energy and invigorating power sought an outlet through the making of books, we are impressed, at the very outset, with a strong sense of dramatic contrast. Study the portraits of the two men: Macaulay, as he looks out at us from the front of Trevelyan's biography, round-faced, unwrinkled, smooth-shaven, complacent; Carlyle, with

Thomas  
Carlyle.

† Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, ii. p. 327.



his tumble of hair and shaggy beard, his gaunt face, worn and lined with innumerable wrinkles, his sunken cheeks and deep-set, wonderful eyes. The face of an inspired peasant ; lit up at times, so those who knew him tell us, by a strong and passionate vehemence, expressive of scorn, of humor; expressive, too, of that infinite reserve of tenderness that lay in the deep places of his strong nature. To this man life was terribly and tragically earnest. He battled through it, with set teeth and iron purpose, as a strong man forces and shoulders his way through a tangled jungle. "Woe unto them," he said to his friend Sterling, and reiterated in his essay on Scott—"woe unto them that are at ease in Zion." He lives

"As ever in his great Task-master's eye ;"

he adds to the stern and inflexible conception of duty characteristic of his Calvinistic ancestry, that indwelling sense of God's presence so strong in the Hebrew prophet, so rare in our modern Western world. To him as to Wordsworth the world is "the living garment of God," creation definable in one or another language as God's "realized thought." Standing thus in the porch of the infinite, he never loses that awe and wonder which the most of us never feel, or, feeling, so easily put by. A man who dwells with "the immensities and the eternities" is not likely to adapt himself to the world's ways, or agree with the world's judgments ; rather like the risen Lazarus in Browning's *Epistle of Karshish*, he brings from other regions a standard which the world cannot understand. Hence, while Macaulay

was in comfortable accord with an age of material progress, teaching, as Emerson said, "that 'good' means good to eat, good to wear, material commodity," Carlyle often stood apart in flat antagonism and fiery denunciation. Uncompromising to himself, he was habitually uncompromising toward others ; crying out to a faithless and blinded generation as some stern prophet of the desert. Writing in *Sartor Resartus* of Teufelsdröckh, the imaginary philosopher into whose mouth he put his own teaching, and whose experiences in many instances are but reflections of his own, Carlyle says : "In our wild Seer, shaggy, unkempt, like a Baptist living on locusts and wild honey, there is an untutored energy, a silent, as it were, unconscious strength, which, except in the higher walks of Literature, must be rare."\* This may stand, with certain reservations, as a picture of Carlyle himself ; in its spirit and broad outlines essentially true.

Thomas Carlyle was born at Ecclefechan, a little village in Dumfriesshire, December 4, 1795. Froude describes the place as "a small market town consisting of a single street, down the side of which, at that time, ran an open brook. The aspect, like that of most Scotch towns, is cold, but clean and orderly, with an air of thrifty comfort."† About sixty miles to the northwest of Ecclefechan lay the district which had brought forth Burns, that other great Scotch peasant, of whose life Carlyle was to be the truest interpreter. Some thirty miles to the south,

\* *Sartor Resartus*, bk. i. ch. iv.

† Froude's *Carlyle*, i. p. 3.

at the edge of the Cumberland Hills, was the birth-place of Wordsworth. Carlyle's father, James Carlyle, was a thrifty, hard-working stone-mason ; a sterling, unapproachable, reticent man, with strong religious convictions, and a faculty of concise and vigorous speech. He possessed "Humor of a most grim, Scandinavian type," a quality which notably characterized his son. James Carlyle was one of five brothers, graphically described by an apprentice to one of them as "a curious sample of folks, pithy, bitter-speakin' bodies, an' awfu' fighters." According to Carlyle himself, they were remarkable for "their brotherly affection and coherence ; for their hard sayings and hard strikings." When such a granite stock produces a genius—a man that can speak for it—we may look for originality, a strong accent, an iron grip, and a stroke like that from a sledge-hammer. There is little in the outward events of Carlyle's life that need detain us. In his childish years he led "not a joyful life," he tells us, "but a safe and quiet one." His home was the prudent, God-fearing household of the Scotch peasant ; all the surroundings wholesome, perhaps, but somewhat rigid and repressing. "An inflexible element of authority," Carlyle writes, "surrounded us all." He ran barefoot with his brothers and sisters, all younger than himself, in the street of Ecclefechan ; he was sent to the village school, and afterward to the grammar school at Annan, a town on the Solway Firth, some eight miles from home. His parents were proud of the ability he showed, and were anxious to fit him for the ministry of the Kirk,

naturally the highest ambition of such a household ; so at fourteen he entered the University of Edinburgh, having walked the eighty miles that lay between Ecclefechan and the capital. He succeeded in obtaining a place as teacher of mathematics in the Annan Academy, and left the university in 1814, before taking his degree, to enter on his duties. In 1816 he gave up his post to become master of a school in Kirkcaldy. But the drudgery of teaching became intolerable, and a change in his religious views had forced him to abandon the idea of entering the ministry. In 1818 he took his little savings and settled in Edinburgh, where he began the study of the law. But he had not yet found his work. Law lectures proved indescribably dull to him, "seeming to point toward nothing but money as wages for all that bog-post of disgust."

Already dyspepsia, his lifelong tormentor, had fastened upon him. He knew that he was "the miserable owner of a diabolical arrangement called a stomach," a bitter knowledge that never left him. These years of uncertain prospects and physical suffering were also a critical time of doubt, despair, and fierce spiritual conflict. He has told us in *Sartor Resartus* the story of this period of "mad fermentation," with its doubts of God, of the obligations of duty, of the reality of virtue. How he stood in those days of trial, "shouting question after question into the Sibyl cave and receiving for answer an echo"; how he called out for truth, though the heavens should crush him for following her ; how he reached at length the appointed hour of deliverance



when, in a mysterious flash of conversion, he came forth free, independent, defiant. We must study this crisis of the spirit in the words of Carlyle himself, remembering the intensity of his nature, his passion for probing things to the center, his sincerity, his capacity for faith.

Meanwhile Carlyle's aspirations had turned toward literature, and he had contributed a number of articles to the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*. He also began to learn German, a study destined to powerfully affect his life and work. His German studies brought him into contact with a literature which seemed to reveal to him "a new heavens and a new earth." He became an enthusiastic student of Richter. His works give evidence of his absorption of the ideal philosophy of Fichte, and above all he came under the spell of Goethe. These studies did more than color Carlyle's thought and help to produce the peculiar mannerism and eccentricity of his style. There was at that time a furor for German literature, and the literary results of Carlyle's studies thus fortunately happened to fall in with the popular demand. Thus in 1822 he contributed an article on *Faust* to the *New Edinburgh Review*; his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* appeared in 1824; his *Life of Schiller*, which had previously come out in the *London Magazine*, was published in book form in 1825; and his *Specimens of German Romance* in 1827. The year before the publication of the book last named he married Miss Jane Welsh, the daughter of a provincial surgeon of good family and of considerable local reputation. On her father's



death Miss Welsh had inherited a small farm at Craigenputtock, in Dumfriesshire, and there Carlyle and his wife settled in 1828. The little farmhouse was set solitary in the midst of a somewhat dreary tract of moorland, and here, shut out from the world, Carlyle threw himself at work with characteristic intensity. He had left behind him the time of hack-work and translations, and was reaching out toward something that should more truly represent him. He wrote a number of essays for the *Edinburgh*, among them his unapproachable study of Burns; and there he composed *Sartor Resartus*. This extraordinary book contains the germ of Carlyle's philosophy. His grievous uncertainties and hesitations were over. Much had been lived through to make this book, and into it Carlyle poured what he had gained, in good measure and running over. Carlyle's personality is always present in his writings, but never more strongly than here. Midway in this mortal life he delivered to us the deepest things that life and suffering had taught him, the essence of his message.

In *Sartor Resartus*, with its indescribable compound of grim humor, abruptness, tenderness, grotesqueness, broken by overpowering torrents of eloquence, Carlyle reveals himself. It was his master passion to get at the heart of any object of thought, to tear away all the external and outward aspects through which any fact may reveal itself to us, and, discarding everything superfluous and accidental, lay bare its underlying meaning. In his studies of men he does not rest at the outward events of their lives; he would lay hold of their very

souls, and it is this which gives to his judgment such an extraordinary truth and value. In the same way he sees that in every case there is the outward form in which a fact becomes apparent to us, its body ; and there is its soul, its inner meaning and reality. "It is the duty of every hero," he declares in a later book, "to bring men back to this reality," to force them to penetrate beneath the surface, to teach them "to stand upon things and not upon the shows of things." *Sartor Resartus*, or the tailor re-tailored, is the philosophy of clothes, that is, the vesture or symbols of things ; it aims to point us to the reality that underlies these outward forms or *clothes*, in which the underlying fact reveals itself. "Symbols are properly clothes—all forms whereby spirit manifests itself to sense, whether outwardly or in the imagination, are clothes ; man's body is but his 'earthly vesture' ; the universe itself, with its manifold production and reproduction, is but the living garment of God." Through all the book spirit is recognized as the true and enduring reality. With Carlyle it is the things which are unseen that are eternal, and in this he stood in absolute opposition to the material and scientific element in his time. Human history itself is but the clothing of ideas in acts, and the great man, or hero, is but the highest human revelation of the will and spirit of God.

In 1833 *Sartor Resartus* began to appear in *Fraser's Magazine*, finding but few readers among a bewildered or indifferent public. In the year following, Carlyle took a decisive step in leaving Craigenputtock and settling in London. There he

lived, during the forty-seven years that remained to him, in a house in Chelsea, which became the resort of many distinguished men, and was thought of by many, says Professor Masson, "as the home of the real king of British letters." Up to this time Carlyle's life had been a stubborn fight with poverty. He had won recognition from the discriminating few; but he would write in his own way and in no other, and as yet he had gained nothing like a popular recognition. In a few years this was entirely changed. His popularity was begun by the appearance of his *French Revolution*, in 1837. About the same time he gave the first of several courses of lectures, which made his strange, rugged figure and impassioned earnestness familiar to London audiences. He "toiled terribly," bringing forth his great works with indescribable stress and effort. In 1866, shortly after he had fought his way through a mighty task—his *Life of Frederick the Great*—he was made Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, a post of great honor. At last his own country had honored her prophet, but the triumph was shattered by the sudden death of Mrs. Carlyle, "for forty years the true and loving helpmate of her husband." Fifteen years longer Carlyle himself lingered on; wandering about the Chelsea Embankment or Battersea Park, living over in an old man's dreams that past which he recorded in his *Reminiscences*. Strength had altogether left him, and life was a weariness. He died, February 4, 1881, and was buried, according to his wish, beside his family in the little churchyard at Ecclefechan.

With all deductions, Carlyle remains one of the most influential and considerable figures in the literature of our century. He stands in the midst of its noise of traffic, its haste to get rich, the prophet of the spiritual and the unseen. Wordsworth had protested against that custom, that daily pressure of the trivial, which deadens the higher side of our nature, and "lies upon us like a weight." Carlyle helped men to rid themselves of the burden of the petty and conventional, which was stunting the growth of their souls. He would have them do this, not by seeking refuge from the world of every day in some region of cloudy romance, but by realizing that, looked at rightly, this world of every day is essentially divine and miraculous. "Is not nature," he asks, "as eternal and immense in Annandale as she is at Chamouni? The chambers of the east are opened in every land, and the sun comes forth to sow the earth with orient pearl. Night, the ancient mother, follows him with her diadem of stars: and Arcturus and Orion call *me* into the infinitudes of space as they called the Druid priest or the shepherd of Chaldea."\*

And great as is this miracle called nature, still greater is the wonder of that miracle called man. As Carlyle was opposed to modern science in his conception of the physical world, seeing in it a living divine revelation, and not a dead "world machine," he likewise became more and more at odds with that view of society which would regard it rather as a

\* Froude's *Life*, i. 244. Cf. passage on Miracles in *Heroes and Hero Worship*, lect. ii.



mechanism than as a living thing. He distrusted the democratic theories and reforms which marked his time. He sneered at the cry for "ballot boxes and electoral suffrages";\* believing that the saving of the world must come not through majorities, which were ignorant or confused; not through institutions, which were likely to become mere hollow, ineffectual contrivances, but through the personal element, the hero or great man, who had been, and must continue to be, the largest factor in history. With Carlyle there is no patent political receipt for progress. He has no patience with that idea of history which regards human society as an organism developed according to fixed laws, an idea which reflects the scientific temper of our time. To him the history of the world is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here. This intense individualism, as opposed to merely governmental authority, may seem to suggest Byron and Shelley, but one must remember that with Carlyle the few are to command, the many to obey.

Without attempting to codify Carlyle's work into any set system, it is safe to say that a great proportion of it is closely related to this central theory of history. In the *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841) the importance of the great man in history is enforced by a study of a series of heroes, representative of the different forms in which the hero has appeared. It aims to show that in all these cases the essential heroic qualities—earnestness, sincerity—have been the same. So the lives of *Frederick the Great* and of *Cromwell* are but more exhaustive studies of the

\* *Heroes and Hero Worship*, lect. iv.



great man as a historic factor. Carlyle's heroes were commonly taken from the strong men who had the power to compel the world to do their will. But we must not fall into the error of regarding him as a mere believer in brute strength. Right and might he believed were in the long run synonymous, not because might made right, but because in the large movement of history the strongest were ultimately the wisest, the most righteous. This thought of the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, and of strength over weakness, is the text of his *French Revolution*. The world is true and not a lie, and a sham government, grown too decrepit to govern, like that in eighteenth century France, is a lie and cannot stand. Had the revolution failed to take place, Carlyle tells us, he would have despaired of the world. As it was it demonstrated that though the mills of the gods grind slowly, injustice, misgovernment, and the scepter of the strong in the hand of weakness, work at last the inevitable retribution. "Verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth."

We may differ in our estimate of the truth or value of Carlyle's doctrines ; we may be convinced that hero worship is a vain dream, as a practical form of government in our modern society ; but this need not at all interfere with our admiration for his books, as masterpieces of literary art. Carlyle's style is without parallel in the entire range of English prose. Often turgid and exclamatory, its lack of simplicity and restraint is relieved by a grim play of humor, or for-

Carlyle's  
style.

gotten in the momentum of its terrific earnestness. Under all mannerisms we know that a strong man is speaking to us out of the depths of his soul, as one man seldom dares to speak to another in this solitary and conventional world. Its power is very different from that of mere literary dexterity. "I feel a fierce glare of insight in me into many things," Carlyle wrote in his Diary, "I have no *sleight of hand*, a raw, untrained savage, for every civilized man has that sleight."\* His *French Revolution* having at length "got itself done" after incredible effort, Carlyle seems to fairly hurl it in the face of the public, which as yet would not know him. "You have not had for a hundred years," he thunders, "any book that comes more direct and flaming from the heart of a living man. Do with it what you like, you——"†

This determination to speak what was in him to say, in his own fashion and without regard to any literary precedent, is another of the many traits which Carlyle and Wordsworth have in common. Both belong in this to that revolt against the formalism of the Augustan Age, and to both "conventionality was the deadly sin."

To the force of earnestness and unconventionality, Carlyle added a phenomenal descriptive power. He had the poet's instinct for the picturesque and dramatic; by the intense concentration of his imaginative insight the past is alive not only for him but for us also; he both sees and makes us see. In his *French Revolution*, the "prose epic" of our century, the most dramatic episode in modern history has

\* Froude's *Carlyle*, iii. p. 47.

† Froude's *Carlyle*.

received its greatest interpretation in literature. The descriptions of the death of Louis XV., of the destruction of the Bastile, the twilight silence of a pastoral idyl after its noise and fury, of the flight and capture of the king—to find anything comparable to these and countless others like these, we must turn to the pages of our greatest poets. Or again, what can we find to set beside those pages in which the meaning and wonder of a great city are flashed on us, as though we had been suddenly caught up into the air and made to look down upon it with the comprehensive and penetrative gaze of a god.\* Carlyle, too, is one of the greatest of word portrait-painters. Read his description of the face of Dante, with its “deathless sorrow and pain”; of Rousseau’s, with his “narrow contracted intensity, bony brows, deep, straight-set eyes.” Read, too, those unsparing characterizations of his contemporaries; they may be unfair, unjust, untrue, but what an instinctive and lavish power of characterization they exhibit. Often carelessly uttered, and soon forgotten, every word goes home to its mark with the merciless power and precision of a well-directed javelin.

And finally, Carlyle’s style reflects his own humor and large-hearted tenderness; the pathetic gentleness of a strong, stern man who has suffered. It were better if we dwelt less on Carlyle’s grumblings and dyspepsia, his irritability, his half-humorous vituperations, and thought more of his unobtrusive acts of kindness and of the compassion that was in him. Surely it is no common pity that goes out to us in

\* See *Sartor Resartus*, bk. iv. ch. iii.

such a passage as this : "Poor wandering, wayward man ! Art thou not tried and beaten with stripes, even as I am ? Even whether thou bear the Royal mantle or the Beggar's gaberdine, art thou not so weary, so heavy laden : and thy bed of Rest is but a grave. Oh, my Brother, my Brother ! why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes !" \*

Carlyle has helped his time not so much by the promulgation of any definite system of philosophy, for in his teachings he is often open to the charge of inconsistency and exaggeration, but by the fresh inspiration he has brought to its higher life. He is a great writer, but above all he has been a spiritual force, quickening and invigorating the moral and religious life. His work is to be associated in this with that of John Ruskin (1819- ), another great exponent of the highest ideas of our century. In Ruskin, much that is best in contemporary life, thought, and art has been combined and stamped with the seal of his own aggressive and dogmatic personality. On the right hand or on the left, he touches or supplements one or another of our great modern guides, rising at the same time distinct from them all in his own work and character. Like Keats he is exquisitely responsive to beauty, and has come as her priest and her revealer. In all his work as art critic, in his lifelong efforts to coax or scourge an obdurate British public to a more general and genuine love of beautiful things, he touches at one point the æsthetic element of the age. Like Words-

\**Sartor Resartus*, bk. ii. ch. ix.



worth, he is the lover and interpreter of Nature, doing for her in his prose a work similar to that which Wordsworth and the other great nature-poets performed in verse. And like Carlyle, Ruskin is a preacher and prophet to his generation ; not rapt, like Keats, in æsthetic delights ; not wholly withdrawn, as Wordsworth, into the contemplation of nature, he throws himself into the noisy strifes and dissensions of his time, coming among the crowds of the market place to warn, to rebuke, and so far as he can, to help and to restrain.

Nothing but a loving study of Ruskin's work can give us any conception of the wonder and loveliness of his prose-poetry of nature. Here the exquisite sensibility of the landscape painter to color and form is joined to the poet's gift of language, his guiding instinct in the choice of words ; here, too, something of the scientist's spirit toward the world of matter is transfused and uplifted by the spiritual apprehension of the mystic. Ruskin's sense of color is as glorious as Shelley's, his word-pictures often as luminous and as ethereal ; indeed, so phenomenal is his descriptive power that he may be thought of as having created a new order of prose. Take, for instance, his description of the Rhone, and notice how alive it is with Ruskin's joy in color and power ; how the wonderful adjectives reveal his delight in the mighty river's crystalline purity and force. "For all other rivers there is a surface, and an underneath, and a vaguely displeasing idea of the bottom. But the Rhone flows like one lambent jewel ; its surface is nowhere, its ethereal self is everywhere, the iridescent



rush and translucent strength of it blue to the shore, and radiant to the depth. Fifteen feet thick, of not flowing but flying water ; not water, neither—melted glacier, rather, one should call it ; the force of the ice is with it, and the wreathing of the clouds, the gladness of the sky, and the continuance of time.” After a few sentences we come upon this bit of pure poetry : “ There were pieces of wave that danced all day as if Perdita were looking on to learn ; there were little streams that skipped like lambs and leaped like chamois ; there were pools that shook the sunshine all through them, and were rippled in layers of overlaid ripples, like crystal sand.”\* Ruskin’s descriptions of nature affect us not merely because of their magical richness and flow of style ; not because he piles up in them a shining structure of light and color, but because to him, as to Wordsworth and Carlyle, the shows of earth and sky are far more than an empty pageant ; because he, too, “ sees into the life of things,”† and reveals it to us. “ External nature,” he declares, “ has a body and soul like a man ; but her soul is the Deity.”‡ And this doctrine that we are to regard Nature as the bodily or visible revelation of God, is not with Ruskin a mere philosophic theory ; it is remarkable for its vitality and definiteness, it is intimately connected with his principles of æsthetics, and makes beauty illustrative of the nature of God. He believes we are so made that, when we are in a cultivated and healthy state of mind, we

\* *Præterita*, vol. i. ch. v.

† Wordsworth, “ Lines on Revisiting Tintern Abbey.”

‡ *Modern Painters*.

must delight in beauty and be thankful. The apprehension of true beauty is therefore a test of our nearness to Him whom it expresses and reveals ; and taste, the faculty by which this beauty is discerned and enjoyed, is, in its highest form, a moral or ethical quality. "The sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other, but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart, both for its truth and its intensity." Hence, in those attributes or qualities which enter into the beauty of Nature, Ruskin sees the types or symbols of "God's nature or of God's laws"; in the infinity of Nature, Divine incomprehensibility; in her unity, Divine comprehensiveness; in her repose, Divine permanence ; in her symmetry, Divine justice ; in her purity, Divine energy ; "in her moderation, the type of government by law."\* With these ideas of Nature and Beauty, Ruskin's principles of art are naturally connected. Just as the perception of Beauty is a moral attribute, so the interpretation of Beauty, which is the work of the artist, is likewise moral, the act of a pure soul. Perhaps Ruskin gives the clearest and briefest statement of this, his fundamental art principle, which has exposed him to endless ridicule and misunderstanding, in a paragraph in *The Queen of the Air* : "Of course art-gift and amiability of disposition are two different things, for a good man is not necessarily a painter, nor does an eye for color necessarily imply an honest mind. But great art implies the union of both powers ; it is the expression, by an art-gift, of a pure soul. If the gift is not

\* *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. pp. 263-319.

there, we can have no art at all ; and if the soul—and a right soul, too—is not there, the art is bad, however dexterous.”\* On this principle of the foundation of great art in morality, all Ruskin’s work as an art critic is built. He tells us, for example, that in all his work as a critic of architecture his aim has been, “to show that good architecture is essentially religious—the production of a faithful and virtuous, not of an infidel and corrupted people.”† These ideas of Ruskin must be firmly grasped, because they are the keynote, not only to his work, but to his life also, making his whole career consistent and intelligible. He is first of all a great moral, or rather a great Christian, teacher. English-born, he really belongs by descent to the land of Knox and Carlyle, and religious earnestness, the passion to convert, to dogmatize, and to reform, goes even deeper with him than his love of beauty. Like Carlyle he was brought up on the study of the Bible, reading it and committing long passages in it to memory in daily Bible lessons at his mother’s knee. While Keats was first of all the dreamy worshiper of absolute beauty, Ruskin has been first of all the impulsive and passionate defender of convictions, the proselytizer and the knight-errant of unpopular truths. Shortly after his graduation from Oxford, he enters the lists in his *Modern Painters* (1st vol., 1843) as the champion of Turner, whose merit as one of the greatest landscape

\* *Queen of the Air*, § 106 ; cf. *Sesame and Lilies*, *King’s Treasures*, *The Mystery of Life, and its Arts*, §§ 105–106 ; v. also, contra, Symonds’ *Renaissance in Italy*.

† *Crown of Wild Olive*, *Trafic*.

painters of all time had then received but scanty recognition. This work, although the outcome of a desire to vindicate the genius of Turner, and the correctness of his principles of painting, far outgrew the limits of its original design, and became, as it progressed, a setting-forth in prose of unexampled splendor and purity of Ruskin's theory of art. He contends for faithfulness to the object portrayed; he would have the painter go himself to Nature, "rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing." This last saying is worthy of our especial regard, because it shows us that Ruskin's teaching is in this but the carrying the hatred of shams, that love of truth and sincerity which Wordsworth and Carlyle exemplify, into the sphere of art. Ruskin's advice may be set side by side with Wordsworth's trust that he has avoided false descriptions in his poems, because he has "at all times endeavored to look steadily at the subject." To "look steadily at the subject"—this chance phrase of Wordsworth's defines for us the nature of that change which had entered into the art, the poetry, the political thought, the life of the English world.

For about twenty years from the publication of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, Ruskin gave his chief energies to the study and criticism of art. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*, besides the concluding volumes of the *Modern Painters*, are among the works of this time. Since then, that is, from about the time of the conclusion of *Modern Painters* in 1860, while Ruskin's deepest interests and purposes have remained unchanged, his



best effort has been given to ethics and social reform. In his loving study of nature and art and beauty, the cry of his century would not let him rest; the thought of the sordid ugliness of the world about him, of the sufferings, the problems of humanity, beset him, and he would not put them by. "I am tormented," he wrote, "between the longing for rest and lovely life, and the sense of the terrific call of human crime for resistance and of human misery for help." To respond to this call meant, in Ruskin's case, to leave a chosen and successful sphere of work, and enter on another bristling with difficulties. It meant the flinging down the gauntlet to his generation, the fierce and single-handed onslaught on its deep-seated evils, its cherished prejudices, the very law by which it lived. Yet the call of human misery was answered, and whatever may be thought of the wisdom or practical value of Ruskin's economic doctrines, we cannot but feel a glow of honest admiration, such as we feel on hearing of any heroic deed, on seeing his ardor, his audacity, his purity of purpose, realizing as we must the greatness of his foe. Great as this break in Ruskin's life seems, from art to social science, in reality the work of his second period is the consistent and logical consequence of his first. For twenty years he had labored for the cause of pure art, and the conviction had but grown stronger in him that pure art was the outcome of a just, pure, and believing community. He believed that it was idle to preach the love of art and of beauty to a nation whose standards of living he considered vulgar and dishonest, whose real worship



was the worship of wealth and worldly success, or, as in his own personification, the "Britannia of the Market," the "*Goddess of getting on.*" To promote the cause of art, it became necessary to secure by the purification of the entire social system, by the establishment of nobler and truer ideals of living, that moral soundness out of which pure art is produced. Ruskin was thus brought by a different route to face those same insistent questions which had enlisted the efforts of Carlyle, of Maurice, and of Kingsley; those questions which yet press upon us unanswered, demanding the service of the best intellect of our time.

The industrial changes of the last hundred years had brought not only an enormous increase of wealth, but had given new chances of acquiring it to people of almost every social class. The early part of the eighteenth century had witnessed the rise of the merchant class through the expansion of the colonial trade; the latter part of the century saw the rise of the manufacturing class, the capitalists. With golden prizes dangling before their eyes, the energies of the great mass of men had become more and more exclusively material and mercantile. In their haste to get rich, men became more selfish and grasping; they were impelled to forget mercy and pity, to forget the feeling for the worth of individual manhood. The love of money, always a powerful factor in human society, became more and more the great temptation of the modern world. We have watched the growth of the new love of nature; nature's fairest scenes were scored by railroads and scorched and blackened by the soot and grime of factories.

We have watched the growth of the new pity for man ; in the early part of our century men, women, and little children were sacrificed to Mammon by labor in mills and factories so prolonged and severe that it stunted and twisted their miserable bodies and darkened their miserable souls.\* When Ruskin began his work as an economist many of these evils had indeed been removed, but the master passion of the age remained unchanged. This modern spirit has been assailed by Wordsworth, by Matthew Arnold, by Tennyson, but no protest has been more direct and momentous than that of Ruskin. To discuss, or even to state, his economic theory, set forth in such books as *Unto This Last* (1862), the *Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), *Time and Tide* (1868), or *Fors Clavigera* (begun 1871), papers addressed to the workingmen of England, would take us beyond our proper limit. It may be said briefly that it is essentially an attempt to apply the ethical teachings of Christianity to the actual conduct of business and government. The competition on which the whole structure of our society is founded Ruskin declares to be "a law of death," to be set side by side with anarchy in its destructive power. The true foundations of a state are not liberty, but obedience ; not mutual antagonism, but mutual help.† Looked at purely from the standpoint of the literary critic, the books in which these strange doctrines are unfolded and elaborated are

\* See Gibbins' *Indust. History of England*, for account of passage of factory laws.

† *Modern Painters*, vol. v. p. 205.

substantial additions to English prose. In the *Modern Painters*, and other early books, Ruskin had proved himself master of a style unprecedented in its wealth of poetry and beauty, but in these later books all adornment is severely subordinated to the strong utterance of the thought. Ruskin himself seems to have been conscious of this change. "Happily," he says, in a lecture delivered in 1868, "the power of using such pleasant language—if indeed it ever were mine—is passing away from me; and whatever I am now able to say at all, I find myself forced to say with great plainness. For my thoughts have changed also as my words have."\* The power had not, indeed, passed away, but we can perceive that the growing weight of thought and earnestness brought greater plainness and directness of speech. If Ruskin's later style has lost something in pure beauty, it has gained in simplicity, in intensity, in pure power. There is, as in the *Fors Clavigera*, directness, tenderness, strong outbursts of denunciation and scorn, with an undertone of satiric humor that recalls the power, but not the malignity, of Swift.† Such writers as Macaulay, Carlyle, and Ruskin force us to realize the greatness of our modern literature in the sphere of prose. Since the time of Addison English prose has steadily broadened in range and increased in literary importance. When we place with the three great prose writers whose

\* *The Mystery of Life, and Its Arts.*

† Cf. Ruskin's recommendation of baked clay as a cheap diet, in *Fors Clavigera*, with Swift's "Modest Proposal for preventing the Children of poor People from being a Burden."

work we have just considered the masters of an earlier generation—the essayist, Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), and Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864)—and when we add to these great names the men who succeeded them—Froude, J. R. Green, S. R. Gardner, and Kinglake, in history, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater, and others, in criticism—we are justified in saying that while in poetry modern England has fallen behind the greatest achievements of her past, in the art of prose writing she has certainly equaled, and probably surpassed, the production of any former period.

Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) stands out from this group as peculiarly representative of the middle years of the century. He was the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the great head-  
**Matthew Arnold.**  
master of Rugby, whose personal force was a power for good in so many lives, and both his father and grandfather were clergymen of the Church of England. He was thus rooted and grounded in faith both by inheritance and early influences. But from these deeply religious surroundings of his boyhood, Arnold was plunged at Oxford into the midst of that conflict of beliefs and no-beliefs, that jar of doubt and speculation, which marked a time of spiritual crisis. At Oxford, indeed, there were “great voices in the air,”\* the voice of Newman, pleading for a solution of all doubt by blind faith, a solution which Arnold afterward declared, to speak frankly, was “impossible.”\* Arnold, who

\* Lecture on “Emerson,” in *Discourses in America*.



had thus abruptly passed from the shelter of his father's influence into the heat of the conflict of his time, seems to have had a certain power to sympathize alike with the teachings of Rugby and the doubts of Oxford. His nature had a positive and emotional, perhaps even a religious strain, but this ran through a temperament austere and coldly intellectual. Emotionally he apparently felt the need of faith, but his intellect, as hard and keen as highly tempered steel, was inexorable in its demands for exact demonstration, for precision and lucidity of thought. A great part of Arnold's poetry is the reflection of this inward conflict between these incompatible elements of his nature. He looks backward with regret and longing, while he suffers himself to be borne along on the relentless currents of his time. In his prose he rebukes, or reasons, or criticises, he builds up systems of conduct; but there remains within him a void which neither his sovereign remedy of "culture" nor any mere ethical system can fill. In his poetry he laments the loss of that which he discards, and half shrinks from conclusions which he feels constrained to accept. Lingering in the long-silent courts of the Carthusians, that speak to him of the mediæval centuries of simple faith, he pictures himself as

" Wandering between two worlds, one dead,  
The other powerless to be born,  
With nowhere yet to rest my head,  
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn;  
Their faith, my tears, the world deride—  
I come to shed them at their side." \*

\* Stanzas from *The Grande Chartreuse*.



Yet we must not think of Arnold's poetry as a mere wail of regret or outburst of despair. On the contrary its prevailing note is self-reliance ; help must come from the soul itself, for

"The fountains of our life are all within."

He preaches fortitude and courage in the face of the mysterious and the inevitable—a courage indeed forlorn and pathetic enough in the eyes of some—and he constantly takes refuge in a kind of stoical resignation. He delights in showing us human sorrow, only to withdraw our minds from it by leading us to contemplate the infinite calm of nature, beside which our transitory woes are reduced to a mere fretful insignificance. All the beautiful poem of *Tristram and Iseult* is built up on the skillful alternation of two themes. We pass from the feverish, wasting, and ephemeral struggle of human passion and desire, into an atmosphere that shames its heat and fume by an immemorial coolness and repose :

"We, O Nature, depart,  
Thou survivest us ! this,  
This, I know, is the law.  
Thou . . .  
Watchest us, Nature, throughout  
Mild and inscrutably calm." \*

Arnold's poetry has an exquisitely refined, finished, and delicate beauty ; it reveals the critic, the thinker, and, above all, the man of a fine but exclusive culture.

\* "The Youth of Man."

Set almost wholly in a single key, there are times when we weary of its persistent and pathetic minor. It is often coldly academic rather than warm with human life and passion, and we are apt to miss in its thin, intellectual atmosphere, just that large-souled and broadly human sympathy which it is difficult to associate with Arnold himself. At times, as in the fifth of the series entitled *Switzerland*, we feel under the exquisite beauty of the verses an unwonted throb of passion, and then, as in the poem last mentioned, we touch the highest point of Arnold's poetic art.

In his work as literary critic, Arnold has occupied a high place among the foremost prose writers of the time. His style is in marked contrast to

**As critic.**

the dithyrambic eloquence of Carlyle, or to Ruskin's pure and radiant coloring. It is a quiet style, restrained, clear, discriminating, incisive, with little glow of ardor or passion. Notwithstanding its scrupulous assumption of urbanity, it is often a merciless style, indescribably irritating to an opponent by its undercurrent of sarcastic humor, and its calm air of assured superiority. By his insistence on a high standard of technical excellence, and by his admirable presentation of certain principles of literary judgment, Arnold performed a great work for literature. On the other hand, we miss here, as in his poetry, the human element, the comprehensive sympathy that we recognize in the criticism of Carlyle. Yet Carlyle could not have written the essay *On translating Homer*, with all its scholarly discrimination in style and technique, any more than Arnold could have produced Carlyle's large-hearted

essay on *Burns*. Arnold's varied energy and highly trained intelligence have been felt in many different fields. He has won a peculiar and honorable place in the poetry of the century; he has excelled as literary critic, he has labored in the cause of education, and finally, in his *Culture and Anarchy*, he has set forth his scheme of social reform, and in certain later books has made his contribution to contemporary thought.

In no direction has this development of prose been more remarkable than in that of the novel, the distinctive literary form of the modern world. Since the publication of Richardson's *Pamela*, in 1740, the range of the novel has immensely broadened, and its importance as a recognized factor in our intellectual and social life has surprisingly increased. William Godwin (1756-1836) employed the novel as a vehicle of opinion. His *Caleb Williams* (1794) was one of the earliest of these novels with a purpose, of which there are so many examples in later fiction. Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), the author of *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee*, *Helen*, and other novels, has been called the creator of the novel of national manners. By her pictures of Irish life she did somewhat the same service for that country that Scott, on a larger scale, was soon to perform for his beloved Scotland; she gave it a place in literature. Shortly before Scott began to create the historical novel, Jane Austen (1775-1817) began her finished and exquisite pictures of the daily domestic life of middle-class England, in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). In these

The growth  
of the novel.

novels the ordinary aspects of life are depicted with the minuteness and fidelity of the miniature painter, yet their charming and unfailing art saves the ordinary from becoming tiresome or commonplace. Miss Austen has found worthy successors, but no superior, in her chosen field. The *Cranford* of Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1866) is a masterly study of the little world of English provincial life, as are the *Chronicles of Carlingford* of Margaret Oliphant (1820). Mrs. Gaskell is further remembered for work of a more tragic and powerful order than the quaint and pathetic humor of *Cranford*. Her first novel, *Mary Barton* (1848), laid bare before the reading world the obscure life and struggles of the poor who toiled in the great manufactories of Manchester. Perhaps the subject is too monotonous and too mournful for the highest art, but the book bears on every page the evidence of insight and of truth.

The *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet*, of Charles Kingsley (1849), the story of a London apprentice who becomes involved in the Chartist agitations, shows the same sympathetic interest in the heavy burdens of the poor, and in that unhappy antagonism between employer and employed which remains one of the unsettled problems of our time. This widening of the sphere of the novel to include the trials or tragedies of the humblest phases of life is a further evidence of that broadening sympathy with the race of man, which we have seen grow stronger in the poetry of the preceding century as ideas of democracy gained in power.

But the life of the outcast and the poor has found



its most famous if not its most truthful chronicler in Charles Dickens (1812-1870), one of the greatest novelists of the epoch. Dickens <sup>Charles Dickens.</sup> was the second of eight children. His earliest associations were with the humbler and harsher side of life in a metropolis, as his father, John Dickens, a clerk in the Navy Pay-office, was transferred from Portsmouth to London in 1814. The knowledge thus hardly gained through early struggles and privations, became a storehouse from which Dickens drew freely in his later work. The Marshalsea Prison, where John Dickens was confined for debt, is described in *Little Dorrit*; in *David Copperfield*, the most autobiographical of the novels, David's experiences as a wine merchant's apprentice may have been suggested by Warren's blacking factory, where Dickens worked as a boy; while his youthful struggles with shorthand and reporting are reflected in Copperfield's later history. Remembering the great novelist's early experience, it seems but natural that he should have chosen to let in the sun and air on some of the shabbier and darker phases of existence; depicting types of many social gradations; obscure respectability, the vagrants and adventurers in the outer circles of society, down, as in *Oliver Twist* (1837-1838), to the pick-pocket and the murderer. There is Jo, the London street waif of *Bleak House* (1852-1853), "allers a-movin' on"; Jingle, the gay and voluble impostor of *Pickwick* (1836-1837); and that questionable fraternity, the Birds of Prey, that flit about the dark places of the Thames in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865). Through this portrayal



of the under strata of society there runs a strong, perhaps a sometimes too apparent moral purpose; yet take us where he will, Dickens' art is always pure, sound, and wholesome.

It is as a humorist that Dickens is at his best. There is a whimsical and ludicrous extravagance in his humor, an irresistible ingenuity in the ridiculous, peculiar to him alone. From the time when a delighted people waited in rapturous impatience for the forthcoming number of *Pickwick*, to the publication of the unfinished *Edwin Drood* (1870), nineteenth century England laid aside her weariness and her problems to join in Dickens' overflowing, infectious laughter. When we are ungrateful enough to be critical of one who has rested so many by his genial and kindly fun, we must admit that Dickens was neither a profound nor truthful interpreter of life and character. His is for the most part a world of caricature, peopled not with real living persons, but with eccentricities and oddities, skillfully made to seem like flesh and blood. We know them from some peculiarity of speech or manner, some oft-repeated phrase; they are painted from without; we are rarely enabled to get inside of their lives and look out at the world through their eyes. The result is often but a clever and amusing burlesque of life, not life itself. It may also be admitted that we feel at times, in Dickens, the absence of that atmosphere of refinement and cultivation which is an unobtrusive but inseparable part of the art of Thackeray. Without detracting from some famous and beautiful scenes, Dickens' pathos is often forced and

premeditated, his sentiment shallow, while there are heights from which he is manifestly shut out. When he attempts to draw a gentleman or an average mortal distinguished by no special absurdities, the result is apt to be singularly insipid and lifeless. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, Dickens has won notable successes outside the field of pure humor. His *Tale of Two Cities* (1859) is a powerful story, quite different from his usual manner, and many scenes throughout his other books, as the famous description of the storm in *David Copperfield*, are triumphs of tragic power.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863) is the keen but kindly satirist of that surface world of frivolity and fashion into which the art of Dickens so seldom penetrates. Thackeray was born at Calcutta, but was early sent to England for his education. He had something of that regular training which Dickens lacked, going to Cambridge from the Charter-house School in London. He left college, however, shortly after entering, to study art on the Continent, and finally, losing his money, he returned to England, and about 1837 drifted into literature. After writing much for periodicals, he made his first great success in *Vanity Fair* (1847–1848). In this book, under its satiric and humorous delineation of a world of hollowness and pretense, runs the strong current of a deep and serious purpose. "Such people there are," Thackeray writes, stepping "down from the platform," like his master, Fielding, to speak in his own person—"such people there are living and flourishing

William  
Makepeace  
Thackeray.

in the world—Faithless, Hopeless, Charityless ; let us have at them, dear friends, with might and main. Some there are, and very successful, too, mere quacks and fools ; and it was to combat and expose such as these, no doubt, that laughter was made.\* ”

The passage is better than any outside comment on the spirit of Thackeray’s work ; only the shallow and indiscriminating reader fails to see that Thackeray’s seriousness is deeper and more vital than his cynicism ; that though the smile of the man of the world be on his lips, few hearts are more gentle, more compassionate, more tender ; that though he is quick to scorn, few eyes have looked out on this unintelligible world through more kindly or more honest tears. Satirist as he is, he kneels with the genuine and whole-souled devotion of Chaucer, of Shakespeare, and of Milton, before the simple might of innocence and of goodness. In the midst of this world of *Vanity Fair*, with its pettiness, its knavery, and its foolishness, he places the unspoiled Amelia and the honest and faithful Major Dobbin. If in *Pendennis* we have the world as it looks to the idlers in the Major’s club windows, we have also Laura, and “Pen’s” confiding mother, apart from it, and unspotted by its taint. But more beautiful than all other creations of Thackeray’s reverent and loving nature is the immortal presence of Colonel Newcome, the man whose memory we hold sacred as that of one we have loved—the strong, humble, simple-minded gentleman, the grizzled soldier with the heart of a little child. In such characters Thackeray, too, preaches to us, in his

\* *Vanity Fair*, vol. i. chap. viii.

own fashion, the old lesson dear to lofty souls,  
that

“Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt;  
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled.”\*

So he echoes Scott’s dying injunction to Lockhart :  
“Be a good man, my dear,” by showing us, in the  
corruption of much that is mean and vile, that beauty  
of holiness which can

“redeem nature from the general curse,”

that fair flower of simple goodness which, blossoming  
in tangled and thorny ways, sweetens for us the  
noisome places of the earth.

In addition to his work as painter of contemporary  
manners, Thackeray has enriched the literature by  
two remarkable historical novels, *Henry Esmond*  
(1852), and its sequel, *The Virginians* (1857–1859).  
In the first of these we have the fruits of Thackeray’s  
careful and loving study of eighteenth century Eng-  
land, a period with which he was especially identified,  
and which he had treated critically with extraordinary  
charm and sympathy in his *Lectures on the English  
Humorists* (published 1853). *Esmond* is one of the  
greatest, possibly the greatest historical novel in  
English fiction. The story is supposed to be told by  
Esmond himself, and the book seems less that of a  
modern writing about the past than the contem-  
porary record of the past itself. Nothing is more  
wonderful in it than the art with which Thackeray  
abandons his usual manner to identify himself with

\* Milton’s *Comus*, p. 177, *supra*.



the narrator he has created. Yet in this, perhaps, we should rather see the real tender-hearted Thackeray, his thin veil of cynicism thrown aside.

Thackeray's style is exceptionally finished and charming; light, graceful, and incisive, it places him among the greatest prose masters of English fiction.

So many able and distinguished writers of the Victorian period have chosen the novel as their favorite or exclusive form of literary expression, and so familiar is their work, that even a mere enumeration of them is here both impossible and unnecessary. Their works, with that of countless others whose books represent every shade of merit or demerit, and reproduce almost every ripple of thought or discussion, are among the best-known influences of our modern life.

Among the many women who have gained distinction as writers of fiction since the appearance of Miss Burney's *Evelina* (1778), one at least cannot be passed over, even in the briefest survey.

Mary Ann, or Marian Evans (George Eliot) was born November 22, 1819, at South Farm, Arbury, a "small, low-roofed farmhouse" in Warwickshire. Her father, George Evans, was agent to Sir Roger Newdigate, of Arbury Hall, within the boundaries of whose estate the farm lay. Arbury Hall is in the northeastern corner of the county, some thirty miles from Stratford. It lies in the same rich and well-watered region that nourished the youth of Shakespeare; a sleepy, abundant land, prosperous, and steeped in drowsy centuries of quiet.



In some part of this rich Midland district, at Griff House, near Nuneaton, at school in Coventry, or at Foleshill on its outskirts, the first thirty-two years of George Eliot's life were passed. She was identified with its local interests by birth and by daily contact : her earliest and tenderest recollections clustered round it, and the grace of its liberal beauty, sanctified by memory, remained with her until the end. Her early surroundings, she tells us,

“ Were but my growing self, were part of me ;  
My present Past, my root of piety.” \*

This English provincial life, thus flowing in the very currents of her blood, became the living material of her art. She was at once of it, and, by the greatness of her genius, apart from it ; able both to depict it from within, and to feel it from without. Birth and association thus qualified her to become its great painter, as emphatically as Dickens was the great painter of the slums and of the poor, or Thackeray of the London clubs and drawing rooms. The rural or provincial background which is the setting of so many of her stories is painted from reality, and many of her best known characters were drawn from or suggested by the Warwickshire people she had early known and loved.

Ordinary and uneventful as these early years in Warwickshire may seem at first, careful study will but strengthen our conviction of their importance in determining the broad character of her art. In a poem full of tender memories, in which she describes

\* Poems, *Brother and Sister*.

her early rambles with her brother, she lets us share the secrets of her childhood.

“ He was the elder, and a little man  
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,  
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,  
Now lagged behind my brother’s larger tread.

If he said ‘ Hush ! ’ I tried to hold my breath ;  
Wherever he said ‘ Come,’ I stepped in faith.” \*

In *The Mill on the Floss*, in Maggie Tulliver’s dim longings and spiritual growing-pains, we gain an insight into those years in which, with much stress and hunger of the spirit, the childish horizon widened. At sixteen George Eliot lost her mother and left school to keep house for her father, gaining some experience of farm-life which she afterward used in her description of the Poyser household in *Adam Bede* (1859). In 1841 she became intimate with a family named Bray, wealthy people who lived in the vicinity of Coventry, and under their influence abandoned forever her faith in Christianity as a divine revelation, seeing in it only a human creation of man’s hopes and needs. Her nature, though prone to speculation, was by no means wanting in religious feeling, and the comparative suddenness of her loss of faith may impress us as unaccountable. In thinking of this we should remember her peculiar disposition. With all her masculine strength and activity of intellect, she was singularly susceptible to influence, and dependent to an unusual degree upon the help and encouragement of others. Strength

\* *Brother and Sister.*

of mind does not necessarily imply strength of character, although we are too apt to confuse the two, and this fact will help us to understand more than one incident in George Eliot's life. From the first her tastes had been distinctly studious and scholarly, and in 1846 she began her literary career by translating a German work in harmony with the skeptical ideas she had adopted. Her home was broken up by her father's death in 1849, and two years later, after a short Continental tour, she settled in London as assistant editor of *The Westminster Review*, to which she had already contributed. Her Warwickshire life was over, and, like Shakespeare when he first turned his face toward London, she stood at the entrance to a new world. *The Westminster Review* numbered Herbert Spencer, James and Harriet Martineau, and many other distinguished writers among its contributors, and George Eliot's connection with it naturally gave her a place in literary circles.

Among others she met Mr. George Henry Lewes, a discursive, brilliant, but somewhat erratic writer, who combined keen literary sympathies with a distinctly scientific and philosophical bent. A deep attachment grew up between them, but marriage was impossible, as Mr. Lewes' wife, from whom he was separated, was still alive, and through a technicality of the law a divorce could not be obtained. Believing the law unjust, George Eliot took a step which, even in its purely social or legal aspects, must be looked upon as a serious error. She entered upon a lifelong union with Mr. Lewes, which, it must be remembered, was in her eyes a true marriage. It is

no justification of this most unfortunate union that it proved a "marriage of true minds," most important in its effects upon George Eliot's literary career. It was at the suggestion of Mr. Lewes that George Eliot turned from her distinctly scholarly and critical labors as essayist and translator to begin that work in fiction on which her fame mainly rests. Heretofore her writing had represented chiefly the scholarly side of her mind ; it had been the outcome of her studies of books. Now, under Mr. Lewes' encouragement, the other side of her genius declared itself by the publication in *Blackwood's* of her first story, *Scenes of Clerical Life; The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton* (January, 1857). This sudden transference of energy into a totally new channel is one of the most surprising incidents of our literary history. From one aspect it is by no means without parallel : Scott abandoned poetry for romance writing ; De Foe at sixty turned from journalism and pamphleteering and produced *Robinson Crusoe*. But the singularity in George Eliot's case is not that at thirty-eight she discovered within her a great gift that she had never dreamed herself possessed of, it is that it was left for another to make this discovery for her ; that this critical change in her career was due not to an impulse from within, but to an influence from without. Thus again, as at the time of her contact with the Brays, we are impressed by her extreme dependence on others. From this "new era" in her life, as George Eliot called it, we are chiefly occupied in noticing the development of this strangely discovered gift, and in



marking the establishment and growth of her fame. *Adam Bede*, her first long story, and one of the most powerful and spontaneous of her books, appeared in 1859, and it was felt "that a new power had arisen in English letters." *Adam Bede* was followed by masterpiece after masterpiece at intervals of one, two, or three years; thoughtful books of substantial workmanship, not fluently written, with Scott's easy joy in power, but with unspeakable effort, self-discipline, and toil. *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868), a dramatic poem, marked a new literary departure, but George Eliot's poetry, though thoughtful and mechanically correct, is distinctly inferior to her prose. Mr. Lewes died in 1878, and barely two years later the world was electrified by the news of George Eliot's marriage to a young London banker, Mr. John Walter Cross. At this time George Eliot was slightly over sixty and Mr. Cross some twenty years her junior. When the intensity of her devotion to Mr. Lewes is taken into account we are inclined to regard this second marriage as but another proof that George Eliot's nature was dependent rather than self-reliant. "In her moral development," writes Mr. Cross, "she showed from her earliest years the trait that was most marked in her through life, namely, the absolute need of some one person who should be all in all to her, and to whom she should be all in all." In the fall of 1880 her health was failing, and in December of that year she died suddenly after a brief illness.

George Eliot stands easily in the front rank of English novelists; she must, moreover, be recognized



as one of the most influential and distinctly representative writers of her time. Whatever views we may hold of the true scope and purpose of fiction as an art, we can hardly escape assigning to George Eliot's work a position of the highest significance and importance in the history of nineteenth century thought. The art of Thackeray may seem to us finer and less labored; we may miss in such a novel as *Daniel Deronda* that great master's half playful cynicism and exquisite lightness of touch. Scott's spontaneous, instinctive power of telling a story for the story's sake may appeal to us more strongly, the romantic twilight, the old-world enchantment of the Waverley Novels may bring us more of that blessed rest from the burdens of the day which we may consider it the true purpose of the novel to bestow. Yet whatever we may find or miss in George Eliot's novels, we must admit that they reveal to us a profound and tragically serious student of life. Employing a literary form which, in less self-conscious and exacting days, was generally looked upon as a means of relaxation, George Eliot's place is rather with Ruskin, Darwin, Arnold, Browning, or Herbert Spencer, with "the teachers and seekers after light," the signs of trouble often written on their foreheads—than with Scott or Jane Austen, with Dickens or Wilkie Collins. Yet George Eliot is more than a thinker, precisely as Browning is more than a thinker; both are artists, and give us, not abstract doctrines, but a philosophy clothed in the language and embodied in the living forms of art. Both feel the

George Eliot  
as novelist.

burdens and obligations laid upon those who in our modern time think deeply or feel acutely, and both, in harmony with its analytic and questioning spirit, are constrained not only to depict but to moralize, to search into the motives and the consequences of conduct, to analyze the subtle constitution of the soul. But in this analysis George Eliot is an artist because she studies and interprets the soul not merely with her intellect but by her true human sympathy, by the intensity of her imaginative understanding. A scholastic flavor hangs about some of our modern guides, as for instance Matthew Arnold, which proclaims them as primarily readers of books. George Eliot was a scholar, but she was still more emphatically a student of life. It is life itself as she has seen it and known it, in the farmhouse or the field, life in the formative experiences of her own soul, which affords her the material for her thought. "I have always thought," she writes, "that the most fortunate Britons are those whose experience has given them a practical share in many aspects of the national lot; who have lived among the mixed commonalty, roughing it with them under difficulties, knowing how their food tastes to them, and getting acquainted with their notions and motives, not by inference, from traditional types in literature, or from philosophic theories, but from daily fellowship and observation." George Eliot herself was such a "fortunate Briton," and her work, like that of Shakespeare, of Burns, of Carlyle, and of Dickens, rests securely on her sympathetic understanding of the daily life of man. The truth of her insight into the

most ordinary, and as we might consider them, commonplace lives, her tenderness for them, her perception of the pathos and the wonder of their narrow world, is one of the finest traits in her character and her art. In her earliest story, after telling us that the Rev. Amos Barton, whose fortunes she is describing, was "palpably and unmistakably commonplace," she goes on to speak of commonplace people in words which may be taken as a text of all her work. The large majority of our fellow-creatures, she declares, are "simply men of complexions more or less muddy, whose conversation is more or less bald and disjointed. Yet these commonplace people—many of them—bear a conscience, and have felt the sublime prompting to do the painful right; they have their unspoken sorrows and their sacred joys; their hearts have perhaps gone out toward their first-born, and they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead. Nay, is there not a pathos in their very insignificance—in our comparison of their dim and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share?" \*

Here is that democratic spirit of human brotherhood of which we have so often spoken, uttering itself again through literature. Reflecting on these words we measure again the distance that the England of Victoria has traveled from the England of Pope. It is not enough for us to appreciate that George Eliot shows us ordinary people under ordinary conditions; others have done this. Her distinction is that she feels and makes us feel a some-

\* *The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton*, chap. v.

thing in ordinary lives which before was not apparent. Perhaps when he looks into his own soul no man truly deems himself commonplace. George Eliot gives us such a glimpse into the souls of others. Hence her characters are substantial living people, filling us with an intense sense of reality. Looking into our own lives we know that their secret vicissitudes are true. Such art is comparatively independent of plot and incident. In order to interest us in her characters George Eliot is not forced, as Dickens was, to depend upon outward eccentricities or cheat us into a conviction of reality by the minute accuracy of the stage setting. In *Tom and Maggie Tulliver*, in *Dorothea Brooke*, in *Tito Melema*, or in *Gwendolen Harleth*, we enter into and identify ourselves with the inner experience of a human soul. These and the other great creations of George Eliot's genius are not set characters ; like ourselves they are subject to change, acted upon by others, acting on others in their turn ; molded by the daily pressure of things within and things without. We are made to understand the growth or the degeneration of their souls ; how *Tito* slips half consciously down the easy slopes of self-indulgence, or *Romola* learns through suffering to ascend the heights of self-renunciation. This contrast between the human craving for happiness regardless of consequences, between the simple desire for pleasure so pathetically inherent in the young and undisciplined, and the stern obligation to sacrifice our pleasure to the common good, is eminently characteristic of George Eliot. She reiterates the hard lesson with inexorable earnestness, that



the weakness which prompts us to thoughtless self-gratification is a wickedness which brings with it inevitable retribution. There are few downright villains in her books, but in almost every novel are characters that fail through selfishness or a weak inability to deny themselves the things that seem pleasant. Beside Tito Melema we naturally place the amiable and yielding Arthur Donnithorne, and in the same general group are Godfrey Cass, Grandcourt in his colossal and imperturbable egotism, and poor desiccated Casaubon who, selfishly unconscious of the sacrifice, suffers Dorothea's fresh and ardent womanhood to be immolated to him and to his "Key to all Mythologies." In *Adam Bede* is Hetty Sorel, with her soft, girlish beauty, "seeing nothing in this wide world but the little history of her own pleasures and pains"; in *Felix Holt*, Esther Lyon, whom Felix declares to be "no better than a bird trimming its feathers and picking about after what pleases it"; in *Middlemarch*, Rosamond Viney, who, we are told, "would never do anything that was disagreeable to her," and in *Daniel Deronda*, Gwendolen Harleth, set between Grandcourt's selfishness and Deronda's self-sacrifice, "busy," at first, "with her small inferences of the way in which she could make her life pleasant." Contrasted with such characters, marring their own lives and those of others by their wrong ideas of life's purpose, are those who are strong enough with deliberate self-abnegation to choose "the painful right." Disciplined by suffering, their personal griefs are merged in the peace that comes from self-surrender. Yet self-sacrifice is insisted on by George



Eliot, not because of an earthly peace or a future reward; right-doing is often a hard thing; wrong-doing is often a pleasant and an easy thing, but "because right is right" we are to follow it "in scorn of consequence." Fedalma exclaims at the crisis of her fate :

" Oh, all my bliss was in my love, but now  
I may not taste it ; some deep energy  
Compels me to choose hunger."

Such a moral tone is both lofty and in the highest degree austere and uncompromising. Not only are the inexorable claims of duty constantly forced home to us, but in the performance of duty George Eliot recognized no divine helper ; she is strengthened by no hope of a reward hereafter. The individual loses that the race may gain. As surely as Byron stood for individualism, hurling his maledictions against the universe because it would not permit him to enjoy, so George Eliot stood for altruism, teaching that the death of selfishness is our road and the world's road to progress and to peace. Such doctrines place her with the great moral teachers of her century, but render her books pre-eminently exacting and almost somber. Her novels move under a heavy weight of tragic earnestness ; admirable as is their art, graphic and telling as is their humor, they are weighed down with a burden of philosophic teaching which in the later books, especially *Daniel Deronda*, grows too heavy for the story, and injures the purely literary value. "My books," she writes, "are deeply serious things to me, and come out of all

the painful discipline, all the most hardly learned lessons of my past life." From the literary aspect perhaps *Silas Marner* is her most artistically perfect story, and *Middlemarch* her greatest work. In the latter book that hunger for an unattainable and far-off good, which George Eliot so frequently expresses, is set amid the stifling atmosphere of modern society. Trying to sacrifice their lives to others, both Dorothea and Lydgate are caught in the mesh of circumstances, and fail. "There is no sorrow," Dorothea exclaims, "I have thought more about than that—to love what is good, to try to reach it, and fail." And Lydgate feels that in her words he has "found room for the full meaning of his grief." But quite aside from their teaching, it is the art of these great books—their poetic beauty of style, their subtle understanding of the lives of men and women—that places them with the great imaginative productions of the literature.

While the life and aspirations of our age find their most popular and influential interpretation in the novel, the Victorian era has made some **Recent poetry.** lasting additions to the great body of English poetry. Poetry has been studied and practiced as an art with a care which recalls the age of Anne, and even minor writers have acquired an extraordinary finish and a mastery of novel poetic forms. This attention to form is commonly thought to have begun with Keats, and since 1830 Tennyson has proved himself one of the most versatile and consummate artists in the history of English verse. As is usual in periods of scrupulous and conscious

art, this recent poetry has been graceful or meditative, rather than powerful and passionate. It excels in the lyric rather than in the dramatic form; it delights in expressing the poet's own shifting moods, and as a rule it leaves to the novel the vigorous objective portrayal of life. It finds a relief in escaping from the confined air of our modern life into the freedom and simplicity of nature, and it has never lost that subtle and inspired feeling for the mystery of the visible world which came into poetry in the previous century. The supremacy of science and the advance of democracy, the two motive forces in English life and thought since 1830, have acted on modern poetry in different ways. There are poets who think themselves fallen on evil days; who, repelled by the sordidness, ugliness, and materialism of a scientific and mercantile generation, seek to escape in poetry to a world less vulgar and more to their minds. Like Keats, they ignore the peculiar hopes and perplexities of their age, to wander after the all-sufficient spirit of beauty. This tendency is seen in the early classic poems of Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), in the *Atalanta in Calydon* of Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837—), or in the poems of those associated with the English Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, as Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), with his odor of Italy and his rich and curious felicity of phrase. Rossetti's poetic world lies beyond the confines of our experience, a shadowy region lit by another light than that of common day. A region of uncertain shapes and vague suggestions, ruled by mystery, wonder, beauty,

and love. In his poetry something of the unearthly spirit of Blake and of the poet of *The Ancient Mariner*, something of the magic of Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, survives. "The Renaissance of Wonder," says Theodore Watts, "culminates in Rossetti's poetry as it culminates in his painting." To some, as to the critic from whom we have just quoted, Rossetti's poetry seems permeated with "the ever-present apprehension of the spiritual world"; to others it is less spiritual than unreal, not lit by Shelley's clear ethereal radiance, but touched with a warm, sensuous, and highly wrought beauty. Whichever may be the true view, it is beyond question that in such masterpieces as *Rose Mary*, *The Blessèd Damozel*, *The Ballad of the White Ship*, *The King's Tragedy*, and in many of his sonnets, Rossetti has made a unique and considerable contribution to the poetry of our time.

This *poetry of evasion*, as it may be called, is seen also in the early work of William Morris (1834- ), in his classic study of *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), and in his *Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870), a gathering of beautiful stories from the myths and legends of many lands. The career of this poet is especially significant: it exemplifies not only the longing of a beauty-loving nature to escape from a sordid and utilitarian age, but also the imperious pressure, even on men of such a temper, of social issues. Even in *The Earthly Paradise*, where the poet, as

"The idle singer of an empty day,"

deliberately turns for relief to the fair world of art, there is the subdued but intrusive thread of sadness. Even in this eternal land of art the voices of his time trouble him. He tells us of pleasant things, as those who in that walled garden of Boccaccio beguiled the time in the sunshine, but his eyes are troubled as at the thought of a plague-stricken city below. In his later life he has turned, as Ruskin did, from the garden of art, to face the issues of the street.

Other poets, unsettled by doubts which have come with modern science, and unable to reconcile faith with the new knowledge of their time, carry into their work that uncertainty The poetry  
of doubt. and unbelief which is the moral disease of their generation. As we have said, the most characteristic poetry of Matthew Arnold is the outcome of this mood, having in its doubts a forlorn and pathetic bravery sadder than open despair. Somewhat the same tone is present, but animated by a strain of greater faith and hope, in the poems of Arnold's friend, Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-1861), a man of genius and of promise, while James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* (1874) is the poetry of despair. It is chiefly by this poem, profoundly original, and burdened with a suffocating weight of gloom and terror, that Thomson is known. Beside the weary anguish of his cry from the abyss, the discontent of Byron seems the petulance of a spoiled child. But the pathos of Thomson's misery is heightened by a study of less familiar poems in which another side of his nature is disclosed. From them we learn to see in him a marvelous power of abandonment to joy,



only surpassed by his capacity for despair. Few poems in our literature are gladdened with as keen a sensibility to beauty as the opening portion of *He Heard Her Sing*. Here the rapture of the artist's temperament finds voice, and the verse leaps forward with a tumultuous delight in the joy of life. Two little idyls, *Sunday at Hampstead*, and *Sunday Up the River*, are very quiet and full of sunshine; but such poems only serve to intensify by contrast the blackness of Thomson's despair.

Happily the two greatest and most representative poets of our epoch, Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning, belong to neither of these groups. Differing widely in manner and in their theory of art, they have at least one point in common. Both face frankly and boldly the many questions of their age; neither evading nor succumbing to its intellectual difficulties, they still find beauty and goodness in the life of the world about them; holding fast the "things which are not seen" as a present reality, they still cherish "the faith which looks through death."

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) is already acknowledged as the representative English poet of his time.

So far as contemporary judgment can foresee, his work will stand to posterity as the most rounded, melodious, and adequate expression in poetry of the soul of Victorian England. Singularly sensitive to the intellectual and spiritual perturbations of his time, he has responded to its moods, entered into its passing phases of thought, and made them the very breath

The poetry  
of faith and  
hope.

Alfred  
Tennyson.

and animating principle of his work. He is a lover of beauty and his view of life is essentially spiritual, yet one great motive power in his work is that science which has been the dominant intellectual force in his time.

Close as he has lived to his age in spirit, Tennyson has dwelt in communion with Nature, holding himself consistently aloof from active participation in the restless and high-pressure life of his generation. Shy, morbidly sensitive, silent, except among an inner circle of chosen friends, the poet has locked himself from his kind with books and nature, a remote and keen observer of the conflicts in which he did not share; to whose eyes the whole battlefield lay disclosed.

Thus two great influences seem to have combined in Tennyson's life, to render him what he was: Nature and books. Like Wordsworth, he was country-bred, and shunned the air of cities; even to the last he "still was Nature's priest." But, unlike Wordsworth, who had but little of the book lover or the scholar about him,\* Tennyson lived close to his time, and to all times, through his love of books. On the side of scholarship, Tennyson claims kindred, not with Wordsworth but with Milton, who was, perhaps, rather the poet of the library than of the fields. Like Milton, he brought to the service of his art all that could be gathered by a lifelong study of

\*Substantiate this statement. *V.*, *inter alia*, the story of Wordsworth's cutting the pages of Burke with a knife which had been used to butter toast, in De Quincey's *Literary Reminiscences*, chap. xiii., "Wordsworth and Southey."

the great productions of the past. His poetry represents the best traditions of literature, as truly as Browning's represents a distinctly radical element, and he constantly delights the scholar by reminiscences of his studies of the great poets of antiquity.\* Through the printed page he felt with no less distinctness the pulse of the world of living men without. The force of these combined influences, books and Nature, grows clearer as we recall the story of the poet's secluded and uneventful life.

Alfred Tennyson was born August 6, 1809, at Somersby, a tiny village in the East Midland region of Lincolnshire, where his father, the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, was rector. The country immediately about Somersby has a richness and beauty wanting in many parts of the county; there is no fen-land, but the hills slope softly into rich valleys. Here and there are bits of woodland; near by there is a glen where the earth is moist under the shadow of the pines. It was into the depth of this glen, while the world was mourning a great poet, that the boy Tennyson stole away alone, and in the fullness of his youthful despair cut in the sandstone the words, "Byron is dead." Tennyson's work bears witness to the indelible impress of these early surroundings. The explorer recognizes here the brook

"That loves  
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves;" †

\* V. E. C. Stedman's study of Tennyson and Theocritus, in his *Victorian Poets*, and the more recent work of Mr. J. Churton Collins on the classical element in Tennyson.

† "Ode to Memory."

he comes upon a gray, half-ruined grange which recalls the desolate retreat of Mariana, or, from a neighboring hill, he looks out over the long sweep of the "ridged wolds" which, rising from the low levels of the plain, stretch away forty miles to the northward until they meet the distant waters of the Humber.

"Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main." \*

The grassy expanse of the Lincolnshire wolds, "wide, wild, and open to the air," under a heaven of gray cloud, is suggested in the opening lines of "The Dying Swan," while an allusion like that to "the low morass and whispering reed" carries us to the fenland that lay a short distance to the south. We must think of the boy Tennyson wandering among such scenes, from the first reticent and undemonstrative, but, we may be sure, living through those intense, inward experiences which, often hidden or unintelligible to those about, yet make up the true life-history of every emotional and imaginative child. After some training at home, and in the Grammar School at Louth, a town some twenty miles from Somersby, Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1828. Here, shy as he was, he showed that he had a rare and beautiful capacity for friendship. He joined a debating society which included among its members James Spedding, F. D. Maurice,

R. C. Trench, and others, the choicest spirits of the college.\* Above all the others was one whose short life is indissolubly linked with the career of Tennyson, Arthur Henry Hallam, a young man of rare promise and singularly sweet and lovable nature. Long before he entered college Tennyson had written verses, he had even printed a volume in conjunction with his brother Charles, in 1827 ; but at Cambridge he first made a decided impression by his prize poem *Timbuctoo*. In 1830 Tennyson made his real entrance into the world of English letters by the publication of a slim volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. We can see now, in this little book, the advent of a new poet. It is largely the work of an experimentalist in meter and melody, including as it does such tone-studies as "Claribel" and "Lilian." These are the preliminary studies of an artist with a fresh and exquisite feeling for beauty of form, who is bent on mastering the technique of his craft. Differing widely from Pope in his poetic manner, he has an equally scrupulous desire for technical excellence. He has something of Keats' sensuous delight in color and melody, something of his magical excellence of phrase, yet even in this early effort we detect a characteristic note of divergence from those poets who, like Keats, loved "beauty only." He shows us his ideal poet † "dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love," whose melodies fling all abroad

\* Many of them became Tennyson's lifelong friends. For reminiscences of the society v. *In Memoriam*, lxxxvii.

† See "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind," included originally in the edition of 1830.



"the winged shafts" not of beauty but "of truth." In a remarkable and important poem, *The Palace of Art*, which appeared in a volume published in 1832, Tennyson defines his position on this point with extraordinary vigor and distinctness. Against Keats' reiterated poetic principle, that

"Beauty is truth ; truth, beauty," \*

Tennyson sets the solemn allegory of the "sinful soul," which possessed all good things, merely that they might contribute to a mere selfish lust of æsthetic enjoyment. Stricken through at last with remorse, the soul, in the isolation of its gilded towers, hears afar off, with perception born of love, the call of humanity. To the fine æsthetic sensibilities of Keats, Tennyson thus added a moral earnestness in which, so far as appears, Keats was deficient. He remained unfaltering in his allegiance to the loftiest conception of the poet's mission. It is his distinction to have successfully combined the conscience of the man with the conscience of the artist, and to the last to have "followed the gleam." †

Tennyson lost his father in 1830, and in that year left Cambridge without taking a degree. In 1833 came the shock of a profounder sorrow in the loss of his more than brother, Arthur Hallam, ‡ who died suddenly at Vienna. *In Memoriam*, that incompa-

\* Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

† See "Merlin and the Gleam," in *Demeter, and Other Poems*.

‡ "More than my brothers are to me."—*In Memoriam*, ix., lxxix.

rable poem in which Tennyson long after gave to the world the record of this story of friendship and loss, admits us into the sacred places of this great grief. Tennyson's shy and morbidly reticent nature made him shrink from contact with the world at large, and he was all the more dependent for love and sympathy on the friendship of the tried and chosen few. Among them Hallam had held the first place, and his loss not only seemed to tear away part of Tennyson's life, but, if we may judge from *In Memoriam*, it set the poet face to face with the everlasting and primal questions of existence. The secret vicissitudes of the soul within us, the hidden convulsions which shake the balance of life, the painful readjustment to changed conditions, these things that constitute the essence of a true biography, are but a matter of surmise to those without. After Hallam's death Tennyson settled in London, living much to himself, writing constantly, but publishing almost nothing. He belonged to a select coterie, the "Sterling Club," where he met Carlyle, Thackeray, Landor, and other famous men. It was a time of preparation and growth, under the teaching of death and sorrow. Nearly ten years of silence were at last broken by the publication, in 1842, of two volumes of poems. The book included all of the earlier poems of which the author's maturer taste approved, revised with the Tennysonian fastidiousness, and about as much new matter. The new poems, among which were the "Morte d'Arthur," "Ulysses," "The Two Voices," and "Locksley Hall," showed a broadening and deepening power, and the volumes won

Tennyson an enthusiastic recognition from both critics and readers. A year later the veteran Wordsworth pronounced him "decidedly the greatest of our living poets,"\* and from this time he took that leading place in the literature of his day which his astonishing vitality and productiveness so long maintained. The collected poems of 1842 showed plainly that distinguishing trait of Tennyson, his extraordinary mastery in widely different fields. His genius is eclectic. The classic world, as in "Ulysses" or "Lucretius"; the mediæval, as in "Stylites" or "Galahad"; the modern, as in "The Gardener's Daughter" or *Maud*, all are at his command. He is the consummate artist, as versatile in manner as he is varied in subject. He can pass at will from the noble epic roll of the *Idylls* to the rough dialect of the "Northern Farmer"; from the pseudo-Wordsworthian simplicity of "Dora" to the somewhat Corinthian ornateness of *Enoch Arden*. In "The Voyage of Maeldune" he touches Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites, while in such stirring battle lyrics as "The Revenge" and the "Light Brigade" he invades the province of Drayton and of Campbell. Yet in all there is an indefinable flavor of individuality, the rough edges and sharp angles of fact are softened, and life is seen through a golden haze of meditative beauty. In the smooth flow of the verse, in its very turns and pauses, we recognize the trick of the Tennysonian manner. "Locksley Hall" is one of the poems which show the nearness of the poet to his time. It breathes the intensity, the exaggeration, the quick despair, the

\* Letter to Professor Henry Reed.

vast and unconquerable hopes of youth, and it sounded as a trumpet call to the young men of that generation. We are swept on in its buoyant movement by the prophetic enthusiasm of the new science which was transforming the world. The strain of personal complaining is overpowered by the deep pulsations of the "wondrous mother age." In its vision of the world that shall be, the very heavens are filled with the argosies of commerce. Then there comes that chant of a progressive humanity which is one of the recurrent motifs in modern literature. As Burns had discerned a time of universal brotherhood "comin' yet for a' that," so Tennyson sees afar off the era of a universal peace, the day of the parliament of man, when the whole world shall be one group of confederated states, when

"The common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
- And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."

From 1842 until the time of his death, Tennyson lived a life of seclusion and steady industry: a life marked by few striking outward happenings, and chiefly remarkable for that progress of the soul within of which the succession of his books is the lasting memorial. The year 1850 stands out from the rest as the year of his marriage to Miss Emily Sellwood, of the publication of *In Memoriam*, and of his appointment to the Laureateship. Three years later he settled at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight. With Farringford and with a place at Blackdown in Sussex, which he bought in 1867 to avoid the curiosity of American tourists, his later life



is chiefly associated. He bent all the fullness of his powers to win success in two great fields of poetry which in his earlier years he had left unattempted—the Epic and the Drama. Four of the *Idylls of the King* appeared in 1859, and others were gradually added until the work grew to the symmetry of its full proportions. In 1875 he published *Queen Mary*, the first of his series of dramas. That a poet of sixty-six, with a lifetime of successes behind him in widely different lines, should leave them to struggle with the difficulties of a new and highly technical form of composition, and that he should persevere in this in spite of repeated discouragements, is worthy of especial notice. The purely spiritual side of Tennyson's genius, present almost from the first, grew with his growth. The merely sensuous delight in the tangible revelation of beauty, the luxury of eye and ear, yielded to a deeper perception of an underlying world of spirit, of which this world of sight and touch seemed but the shadow. The second "Locksley Hall" is full of a sense of the limitations of the new science, as the first is the pæan of its seemingly boundless possibilities. In "Despair" the issue raised by the scientific thought of the day is faced with a merciless and unflinching power. If the world is Godless and man but a better brute, our life is a cheat and a curse, and endurance of it intolerable and purposeless. Face this and end it. Here the extreme but logical conclusion of those who see nothing in the universe but matter and law, is thrust home on us in poetry of passion and of terror. Meanwhile, in such poems as "De Profundis" and



"The Ancient Sage," we see Tennyson's own conviction deepen that God and spirit are the eternal realities of the world. Poem after poem in *Demeter*, a book published just before the poet's death, turns on the mysterious relation of soul and body. It is the book of old age, written in the shadow of that night when no man can work. The servant body is falling into ruin, but everywhere the triumph of the undying spirit over the failing flesh is triumphantly proclaimed. The body is "foul at best"; it is but "the house of a brute let to the soul of a man," and its office done; the man "stands on the heights of his life, with a glimpse of a height that is higher."\* When he wrote *Demeter*, Tennyson had passed the allotted threescore years and ten. He was awaiting with a beautiful tranquillity and confidence the time when the door of this "goodly prison" should be opened. Death came to him gently, as the gracious and fitting close to a lofty life. The white mist hung low over the earth, but the room in which the poet lay was glorious in moonlight. Illuminated in its white radiance, a volume of Shakespeare in his hand, his finger still marking the dirge in *Cymbeline* which he had lately read, the Laureate passed peacefully out of this "bourne of time and space"† as one prepared to depart.

Theodore Watts has told us that there are poets of *energy* and poets of *art*‡—poets, that is, whose pre-

\* "By an Evolutionist," in *Demeter, and other Poems*.

† "Crossing the Bar." *Ibid.*

‡ See the admirable and suggestive essay on "Poetry" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth edition.

dominant quality is original power, eruptive and irresistible as the volcanic discharge of molten lava, and poets whose well ordered and less impulsive work bears the high finish of a refined and scrupulous art. In our day, Browning admirably represents the poet of energy, while Tennyson stands no less emphatically as the poet of art. As a craftsman Tennyson has few superiors in our literature; he approaches Milton in the perfection and excels him in the variety of his poetic workmanship. The Tennysonian style at its best has "an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of expression";\* it has that intricacy of structure which points to extreme care and slowness in composition. While at times it can be terse and strong, or obtrusively simple and unadorned, its characteristic excellence is not compression or directness. Tennyson's gift is neither the sublime reticence and conciseness of Dante, nor the limpid and indescribably moving simplicity of Wordsworth when he is at his best. Graceful, melodious, and tender, Tennyson breathes through silver rather than blows through bronze. While in Browning's masculine and rugged utterance the thinker obtrudes himself, so that inconsiderate readers are often led to undervalue the purely poetic excellence, in Tennyson, through the very charm and perfection of his art, we are rather apt to underestimate the

\* Matthew Arnold, *On Translating Homer*, p. 285 (Macmillan's edition). The student is advised to read carefully the analysis of Tennyson's style in this passage. Note particularly the distinction between the *simplicité* of Wordsworth and Tennyson's *simplesse*, p. 289.

solid substratum of philosophic thought. We will therefore briefly consider Tennyson's poetry from this aspect in preference to dwelling on its obvious beauties. We will attempt to relate his work to those two new elements—the close communion with the life of nature, the broader sympathy with the life of man—which we saw take their rise in the first quarter of the eighteenth century to become the motive force in the literature of modern times. As a

Tennyson as poet of nature Tennyson is sometimes  
a poet of spoken of as the disciple of Wordsworth,  
nature. but in fact, while he resembles the older

poet in minuteness and accuracy of observation, in other respects his attitude is fundamentally different. As we have said, to Wordsworth an Infinite Power was perpetually revealing itself, not merely through but in nature. He believed that nature possessed a conscious life, and that

“ Every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes.”

Tennyson, on the other hand, especially in his earlier work, is impressed with the *order* underlying the processes of nature, with the “*law* which cannot be broken,” and is not insensible, as was Wordsworth, to the aloofness and even apparent antagonism of nature to man. In a word, Wordsworth's view of nature is essentially *mystical*, and Tennyson's inherently *scientific*. To Wordsworth, moreover, as in “The Primrose and the Rock,” nature seems the unbroken revelation of divine love, while Tennyson, like Lucretius, Byron, and Leopardi, is not insensible

to the mystery of her seeming cruelty and indifference. To the misanthropic hero of *Maud*,

“Nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;  
The mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow  
speared by the shrike,”\*

the “whole little world” is “a world of plunder and prey.” The conviction of Lucretius that man is but the puppet of mighty and impersonal agencies, produced and destroyed with equal indifference by the mechanical operation of purposeless laws of life, is recognized and combated in *In Memoriam* and “Despair.” Tennyson quiets this paralyzing fear by his unshakable trust in the faith and lofty intuitions of man’s soul, and by his assurance that the workings of nature show an eternal purpose of progress, rather than the operation of blind and meaningless forces. He finds God

“Not in world or sun,  
Or eagle’s wing, or insect’s eye,”†

nor in “the freezing reason,” but in man’s capacity to feel. He opposes to nature’s apparent indifference and cruelty the doctrine of evolution. This doctrine, the greatest contribution to thought of contemporary science, finds in Tennyson its poetic exponent; it is the very foundation stone of his philosophy.

In his feeling for nature Tennyson is thus as truly the poet of modern science as Wordsworth and Coleridge were of the German philosophy of their day, but he accepts the dogmas of science only to interpret them according to his own poetic and spiritual insight.

\* *Maud*, iv. stanza 4.

† *In Memoriam*, cxxiv.

Tennyson is no less distinctively the scientist in his views of human progress ; he recognizes a gradual and orderly development as the law alike of human society and of the material world. Byron's rebellious and ill-regulated clamor for liberty, Shelley's noble "passion for reforming the world" by some sweeping and unaccountable conversion of humanity, is succeeded by Tennyson's belief in that "moving upward" through the innumerable centuries whereby the beast in man is brought at length under the mastery of the spirit. In their youth Byron and Shelley saw liberty stricken down and bleeding through the reactionary power of conservatism ; Tennyson, as a young man, witnessed the passage of the first Reform Bill (1832) and other hardly less important measures, by the strength of the reviving democracy ; he beheld the peaceful advance of liberty by the modification and through the agency of existing institutions. This gradual, legal and definite progress he has from first to last consistently represented. At the outset of his career he rejoices to see freedom

" Slowly broaden down  
From precedent to precedent." \*

At its close he pictures her as one who

" like nature, would'st not mar  
By changes all too fierce and fast :  
This order of her human star,  
This heritage of the past." †

\* " You ask me why, tho' ill at ease."

† See also " Politics " in *Demeter*.



Tennyson often touches on the social questions of his time: in *The Princess* on the rights of women; in a large group of poems, in which *Maud*, *Aylmer's Field*, and "Locksley Hall" are included, on social distinctions as a bar to marriage. But the noblest and most important exposition of his views of human progress is found in *Idylls of the King*.

The *Idylls of the King* has been called a quasi-*èpic*. Departing from the conventional epic form by its lack of a closely continuous narrative, it has yet that lofty manner and underlying unity of design which leads us to class it with the epics at least in the essentials. It consists of a series of chivalric legends, taken chiefly from the *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory, grouped so as to exhibit the establishment, the greatness, and the downfall of an ideal kingdom of righteousness among men. "The Coming of Arthur," the ideal ruler, shows us the setting up of this kingdom. Before this was disorder, great tracts of wilderness,

The "Idylls of the King."

"Wherein the beast was ever more and more,  
But man was less and less." \*

Arthur slays the beast and fells the forest, and the old order changes to give place to new. Then the song of Arthur's knights rises, a majestic chorus of triumph :

"Clang battle-ax and clash brand. Let the King reign."

In "Gareth and Lynette" the newly established kingdom is seen doing its work among men. Arthur,

\* "The Coming of Arthur."

enthroned in his great hall, dispenses impartial justice.  
The knights

“ Ride abroad redressing human wrongs.”

The allegory shows us, in Gareth's contests with the knights “ that have no law nor King,” the contest of the soul with the temptations that at different periods of life successively attack it :

“ The war of Time against the soul of man.”\*

Then follow the *Idylls*, which trace the entrance and growth of an element of sin and discord, which spreading pulls down into ruin that “ fellowship of noble knights,” “ which are an image of the mighty world.” The purity of the ideal kingdom is fouled, almost at its source, by the guilty love of Lancelot and the Queen. Among some the contagion spreads ; while others, in an extremity of protest, start in quest of the Holy Grail, leaving the duty at hand for mystical visions. Man cannot bring down heaven to earth, he cannot sanctify the mass of men by his own rapturous anticipations ; he cannot safely neglect the preliminary stages of progress appointed for the race, he “ may not wander from the allotted field before his work be done.” †

So by impurity and by impatience the rift in the kingdom widens, and in “ The Last Tournament,” in the stillness before the impending doom, we hear the shrill voice of Dagonet railing at the King, who thinks himself as God, that he can make

\* “ Gareth and Lynette.” Note the significance of the entire passage in which this line occurs.

† “ The Holy Grail.”

“Honey from hornet-combs  
And men from beasts.”

In “Guinevere,” unequaled elsewhere in the *Idylls* in pure poetry, the blow falls ; at length, in the concluding poem, Arthur passes to the isle of Avilion, and once more

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new.”\*

Tennyson himself tells us that in this, his longest poem, he has meant to shadow “sense at war with soul,”† the struggle in the individual and in the race, between that body which links us with the brute and the soul which makes us part of a spiritual order. But the mastery of the higher over the lower is only obtained through many seeming failures. Wounded and defeated, the King exclaims :

“For I, being simple, thought to work His will,  
And have but stricken with the sword in vain ;  
And all whereon I lean’d, in wife and friend,  
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm  
*Reels back into the beast, and is no more.*”‡

But he also half perceives the truth which it is the poet’s purpose to suggest to us. It is short-sighted to expect the immediate sanctification of the race ; if we are disheartened, striving to “work His will,” it is because “we see not to the close.” It is impossible that Arthur’s work should end in failure—departing, he declares, “I pass, but shall not die,” and when his

\* “The Passing of Arthur.”

† “To the Queen,” epilogue to *Idylls of the King*.

‡ “The Passing of Arthur.”

grievous wound is healed, he will return. The *Idylls of the King* is thus the epic of evolution in application to the progress of human society. In it the teachings of *In Memoriam* assume a narrative form.

“ Move upward, working out the beast,”

may be taken as a brief statement of its theme ; and we read in it the belief in the tendency upward and an assurance of ultimate triumph :

“ Oh, yet we trust that somehow good  
 Will be the final goal of ill,  
 To pangs of nature, sins of will  
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;  
 That nothing walks with aimless feet,  
 That not one life shall be destroyed,  
 Or cast as rubbish to the void  
 When God hath made the pile complete.” \*

Tennyson, as the representative poet of modern England, is the poet of modern science. But he also represents that intense spirituality which is conspicuously present in these so-called mercantile and material times. With the scientist's deep perception of the presence of *law*, he himself shared, as did Wordsworth, in the visionary rapture of the mystics. For him, as for Arthur, the world of spirit veritably exists, more substantial than the world of sense, but the barrier to our entrance is in our own limited powers. When the knights report the result of their search after the Grail, Arthur declares :

“ Ye have seen what ye have seen ”—

\* *In Memoriam*, liv.

each as much as his spiritual sight permitted him. Those with Gareth looking on the towers of Camelot, cry out in the disbelief of the materialist :

“ Lord, there is no such city anywhere  
But all a vision.”

But the warder tells them that the city is spiritual and therefore real, seeing it

“ is built  
To music, therefore never built at all  
And therefore built forever.”

Tennyson unites the modern grasp of physical truth with the apprehension of that spiritual element which permeates and sustains it, and to him, as his own Arthur, the

“ Visions of the night or of the day  
Come as they will.”\*

Appreciating, with the scientist, the law of the world of sense, he yet asks with the idealist :

“ The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains—

Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns ? ” †

He yet points us to

“ That true world within the world we see,  
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore.” ‡

\* “ The Holy Grail.” See the curious account of Tennyson’s trances, or visions, in Waugh’s *Alfred, Lord Tennyson : a Study of His Life and Works*.

† “ The Higher Pantheism.”

‡ *De Profundis*, ii. 1. Cf., also, “ The Ancient Sage.”



While no recent English poet is so versatile and so broadly representative as Tennyson, Robert Browning (1812-1889) has satisfied, as no other poet has done, some of the deepest spiritual needs of his generation. From the first his genius has been more bold, irregular, and independent than that of Tennyson; he has been less responsive to the changing moods of his time. Indeed, he has rather proved its leader, taking his own way, unmoved by praise or blame, and at last compelling many to follow him. His work is highly charged with an abounding vigor and audacity characteristic of Browning himself. Mrs. Orr tells us that "his consciousness of health was vivid," Bayard Taylor speaks of his "vigor and elasticity," his handshake has been compared to an electric shock, and Mr. Sharp speaks of his "intensely alive hand." Landor writes of him in lines crowded with suggestion :

Robert  
Browning.

" Since Chaucer was alive and hale  
No man hath walked along our roads with step  
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue  
So varied in discourse." \*

Such allusions bring Browning before us as the keenly observant man of the world, alive to his very fingertips, full of that robust and wholesome capacity for enjoyment which we associate with Chaucer, and Shakespeare, and Scott, but which among our modern men of letters is unfortunately rare. A knowledge of Browning's genial and aggressively active

\* Sonnet to Browning.

personality is of real value to one who would seize upon the spirit of his work. It is not an intrusive curiosity, but the spirit of the genuine student, which leads us to contrast Browning's superb equipoise with the lack of balance shown by so many of his contemporaries ; to set his ready fellowship with men, his soundness of mind and of body, beside Rossetti's morbid life and imperfect human sympathies, his insomnia, and his disordered nerves. Matthew Arnold found a partial relief from the "something that infects the world" in the patient calm of nature, yet to his melancholy fancy earth and sky seemed

"To bear rather than rejoice."

But to Browning's inextinguishable hopefulness, God's "ancient rapture" in life, and love, and beauty, is still visibly renewed in his world.\* Like the happy child in *Pippa Passes*, he sings in our restless, doubting century, with its tired nerves and throbbing temples, the strange song of courage and of faith.

"The year's at the spring  
And day's at the morn ;  
Morning's at seven ;  
The hill-side's dew-pearled ;  
The lark's on the wing ;  
The snail's on the thorn ;  
God's in His Heaven—  
All's right with the world."

We are refreshed by a wholesome delight in the simple joy of living, that in the thin intellectual

\* *Paracelsus*, act v.

atmosphere of our civilization, comes with a delicious flavor of the antique world.

“O our manhood’s prime vigor! no spirit feels waste,  
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing, nor sinew unbraced.

How good in man’s life the mere living, how fit to employ  
The heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy.”\*

This strain of manly confidence, this overflowing force and vitality, is not faltering or exceptional, it is part of Browning’s masculine and powerful genius, and of his wholesome and happy life. Courage and cheerfulness are inseparable from his fine physique, his massive breadth of character, his wide sympathies with man and nature, his hearty pleasure in physical and intellectual activity. He had a strange fellowship with all living things, reaching down to the tiny creatures of the grass; he loved music and painting and sculpture, with a love developed by long study and intimate knowledge. The beauty of Italy, his chosen land, that he declared was his “university,” early entered into his life and art, and besides all this he found, what men of genius rarely find, a woman of fine nature and answering genius capable of responding to his highest moods.

There are few more beautiful love stories in our literature than this. In an exquisite series of *Sonnets*, probably her most perfect work, Elizabeth Barrett has told how Browning crossed the darkened threshold of her sick room, and how she knew that it was not death which held her, but love.† And in *One*

\* *Saul*.

† *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, i.

*Word More*, or *By the Fireside*, or in that exalted apostrophe in *The Ring and the Book*,\* Browning pays an answering tribute to his "moon of poets." In thinking of Browning's unfaltering cheerfulness, we must remember that between his marriage to Miss Barrett in 1846 and her death in 1861, lay fifteen years, passed in the inspired air of Florence, of companionship as perfect as it was rare. Browning has been one of the most prolific of English poets. His work covers more than half a century of almost incessant production (*Pauline*, 1833—*Asolando*, 1889), exhibiting in sheer bulk and intellectual vigor a creative energy hardly surpassed by any poet since Shakespeare. Written while England was passing through a time of spiritual despondency and fluctuating faith, Browning's poetry impresses us as some great cathedral, in which every part is duly subordinated to one symmetrical design, and consecrated to one ultimate purpose. It is independent and often eccentric in style; it is defiant of the prevailing theories of art; it rises solitary, abrupt, rugged, and powerful, from an age of fluent, graceful, and melodious verse.

Browning, like Milton and Wordsworth, comes before us as a teacher, but our first consideration is naturally not the truth or value of his philosophy, but the poetic quality of his work. It is as a poet that he has chosen to appeal to us, and it is primarily as poet and not as philosopher that his work must take its place in literature. The salt of poetry may

\* See passage beginning "O lyric love," in *The Ring and the Book*, at the close of bk. i.

preserve a poem the philosophy of which is trite or fallacious, but it may be questioned whether any philosophy, however noble or invigorating, will secure it a permanent place in literature if it lack the poetic quality. Looked at simply from the art side, few dispassionate readers will deny that Browning's poetry has serious defects. In many instances, more especially in the longer poems, the fine gold is debased by an alloy of versified prose; and long philosophic arguments, ingenious, subtle, and sometimes wearisome, are thrust forward untransmuted by the poet's alchemy. It is probable that some such poems, for instance the *Red Cotton Nightcap Country* (1873), while they may continue to hold a formal place in the literature, will cease to be read except by the curious or conscientious student. If Browning's verse is musical, its music is certainly different from that with which the masters have made us familiar. Habitually spirited, it is often jolting and abrupt; full of parentheses and ejaculations, and moving by sudden starts and jerks. To the casual reader Browning often seems impatient of form in his anxiety to get the thing said; thoughts and feelings seem crowding and jostling together for utterance, and he seems only anxious to "hitch the thing into verse," that he may turn to something new. His rhymes are apt to be fantastic and ludicrously ingenious to an extent unprecedented in serious poetry. The extravagances of *Hudibras*, of *Beppo*, and of the *Fable for Critics* in this direction, are fairly outdone by Browning in the *Old Pictures in Florence*, or in *Pacchiarotto*. The last-named poem



in particular is an unparalleled exhibition of rhythmical gymnastics. English is racked and wrenched to the uttermost, and when it fails a Greek or Latin word is unceremoniously caught up and thrust in to take its place. It must further be admitted that Browning is at times obscure to a degree which even the difficulty of his subject does not justify; but this defect has been dwelt on to weariness, and usually with an unfortunate exaggeration. Indeed a very large proportion of Browning's poetry presents no serious difficulty to an ordinarily attentive and unprejudiced reader; the complaint of obscurity comes most loudly from those whose knowledge of his work is slight, or from those who are so out of sympathy with his spirit that they

“endure

No light, being themselves obscure.”

Such obvious features of Browning's art have exposed it to an unfavorable criticism in which there is undoubtedly a proportion of truth. On the other hand many unacquainted with Browning's theory of art have been confident that he had missed his mark when he had only failed to hit their mark, at which, in fact, he had never aimed. In an age when finish, smoothness, and melody are made the primary requisites in poetry, our taste is naturally repelled by work distinguished by excellence of a very different order. We must remember that taste in such matters is largely influenced by custom, and that the generation trained to delight in the heroic couplet found even the blank verse of Milton intolerably harsh. In a

word, Browning's artistic merits are those which, as they are novel, we have not been trained to appreciate; his defects are too often those to which training has made us the most sensitive. To enjoy Tennyson's work but little preparation was needed; the traditions of poetry were with him, and he completed or enlarged what others had begun. But Browning has sought to conquer new regions for his art; like Wordsworth he has come distinctly as an innovator, and as such is within Wordsworth's rule that every great and original poet must first create the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.

It is doubtful whether Browning's purely poetic merit is even yet fully appreciated. He has a marvelous accuracy of observation, painting the revealing details of a situation with a phenomenal truth and vividness. In much descriptive poetry beauty is gained at the expense of truth and reality; in Browning beauty is habitually subordinated to truth and power.

" A tap at the pane, the *quick, sharp scratch*  
*And blue spirt of a lighted match,*  
 And a voice less loud thro' its joys and fears  
 Than the two hearts beating each to each." \*

These lines may not impress us as beautiful, but we must recognize in them a precision in the use of words, a felicitous correspondence of sound and sense, which marks the master of style. Again, the description in *Christmas Eve* of the congregation in the Methodist chapel is no more beautiful than an

\* "Meeting at Night."

interior by Teniers, but it has the same inimitable minuteness and fidelity. In the same way Browning's metaphors, while unusually original and expressive, are often exact and striking rather than beautiful, being employed as an actual help to our understanding.\* Many of Browning's longer poems, through the very wealth of his resources and through his erratic agility of mind, lack unity and directness; he is perpetually turned aside by the chance encounter with some tempting idea, so that we often leave the direct course for a kind of zigzag progress. On the other hand, he has given us poems, such, for instance, as "Martin Relph" and "Ivan Ivanovitch," which are masterpieces of strong and graphic narrative. In one province of poetry he is supreme—the dramatic monologue.† As triumphs of the poet's art such marvelous productions as "My Last Duchess," "Andrea del Sarto," or "Fra Lippo Lippi" stand alone. It is as idle to say that such poems have not the sweetness or melody of Tennyson as it would be to complain that the "Lotus-Eaters" lacks Browning's invigorating power. On such a principle we might condemn Milton because he could not create a Falstaff, or Shakespeare because he produced nothing similar to *Paradise Lost*. But above all we must

\* See in illustration of this the metaphors in *The Ring and the Book*; see, also, conclusion to "Shah Abbas" in *Ferishta's Fancies*, where the difficulty of crossing a room in the dark without stumbling is likened to that in entering the heart of another without the lamp of love as a guide.

† A monologue or soliloquy, dramatic through the presence of some other person than the speaker, a presence inferred only from the words of the speaker himself.

rémember that Browning's poems are written in accordance with what he regarded as the true function of art. In his view the highest office of the poet, as of other artists, was to arouse, to sting into consciousness, the diviner side of man's nature. He teaches in "Andrea del Sarto" that something more than mere technical excellence is required for the production of the highest art; that it is better for the medium of expression to give way under the strain of thought and passion than for it to be coldly perfect because the soul is wanting.\* The organist in "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha" turns dissatisfied from the intricate, technical excellence of a fugue, to Palestrina, the composer who emancipated music from pedantic trammels and breathed into it a new soul. In "Old Pictures in Florence" we are taught that it is the mission of art to tantalize by its very incompleteness, rather than to satisfy by its perfection and repose; that the aim of the true artist is to arouse a longing for an unseen and eternal perfection, which no earthly similitude can ever fully reveal. Without this moral, or spiritual, element and purpose, art sinks into a mere sensuous satisfaction in color and form, such as that shown by the corrupt bishop who ordered his tomb at St. Praxed's. In the bishop's dying directions for the adornment of his tomb we see how a refined delight in the mere externals of beauty and culture may go hand in hand with the moral depravity of a "low-thoughted" spirit. One may prefer Tully's picked Latin to Ulpian, glory in the colors of marble and jasper, and design a frieze

\* Cf. Ruskin's *Theory of Art*, pp. 350-351, *supra*.

in which pagan nymphs dance through the most sacred scenes of Christian story, one may do all this and only demonstrate the radical insufficiency of the purely æsthetic view of art.\*

Browning, then, does not set himself to manufacture "poetic confectionery"; strength and suggestiveness, rather than beauty, are his primary objects, and consequently his poetry is not cloying or relaxing, but bracing, instinct to an extraordinary degree with moral invigoration. It is not intended to be taken as a mild form of opiate, but to "sting," as Browning himself tells us, "like nettle-broth."† Looking, therefore, at his poetry apart from its moral or philosophic value, it appears that Browning's positive merits as an artist have been often undervalued because of the novelty of his methods and aims; because his peculiar excellences are distinctly different from those with which the tone of recent poetry has made us familiar.

Browning's optimism, of which we have already spoken, is not thoughtless but well grounded. Like Shakespeare, he does not seek to evade the melancholy and perplexing aspects of life, but confronts and conquers the specters of the mind. Like his own "Cleon," his sense of the inadequacy of life is keen, while he sees a "world of capability for joy spread round us," "tempting life to take."‡ Even his buoyant and

Browning as  
a teacher.

\* "The Bishop orders his tomb at St. Praxed's."

† See Epilogue in *Pacchiarotto*, an important poem as a statement of Browning's view of his own work. Note especially last stanza.

‡ "Cleon."



healthy nature is stirred to the depths by the bitter compulsion of his time. We have compared him to Chaucer, but he is Chaucer surrounded by the subtleties and searchings of nineteenth century thought; a profound and original genius, facing in deadly earnest men's "obstinate questionings" of life and of death.

To Browning the only explanation of the mystery and the misery of this present life is to be found in its relation to a life to come. His view of life, like that of Carlyle, of Wordsworth, and of Tennyson, is essentially spiritual. To him God, the soul, and personal immortality are the fundamental and all-important facts.\* Wordsworth found an intimation of immortality in certain ideas or sympathies innate in the soul; Browning found a similar intimation in the soul's inextinguishable longings and aspirations, which earth cannot satisfy and which witness to another life as the only adequate sphere of our activity. In a famous prose passage Browning has declared that nothing but the soul "is worth study." To him it is worth study because it only of things earthy will survive the temporal, because it sustains a definite relation to the eternal sphere of things. The development of the soul in this relation to the unseen is consequently the chief subject of Browning's work, as it is—in his judgment—the supreme interest of life. Familiar as this thought may seem to us, by making it the essence of his delineation of life, Browning has virtually created poetry of a wholly new order. Shakespeare is the unapproached

\* See "La Saisaiz"—passage beginning, "You have questioned, I have answered," etc.

interpreter of the life of man on earth, but in his dramas life is revealed in no vital or necessary relation to a hereafter; encompassed by darkness, it rather seems to us to be "rounded by a sleep." Milton, projecting himself in imagination into a world where Shakespeare did not enter, has, on the contrary, no real hold on the common or daily life of man.\* Browning's purpose to show us the seen in the light of the unseen is, almost as truly as Milton's, a thing "unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." Shakespeare wrote in and for a bustling world, and his characters are shown to us in action. Browning wrote when life was outwardly more tame and conventional, and inwardly more complex; when the chief interest of man was not action but thought. Accordingly, as we might expect, Browning's dramatic power is of another order from that of the Elizabethans; he has a fine feeling for the striking elements of a situation, but his characters reveal themselves less through action than through thought. He is at his best when, in some moment of spiritual crisis, he makes a soul describe its inmost nature; he admits us to the inward struggle, intellectual or moral, often leaving us to infer its declaration in outward act. These words of George Eliot, who often worked like Browning in this hidden region of thought, help us to realize the peculiar difficulty of the task: "For Macbeth's rhetoric about the impossibility of being many opposite things in the same moment referred to the clumsy necessities of action, and not to

\* See comparison of Milton and Shakespeare, pp. 185-186, *supra*.

the subtle possibilities of feeling. We cannot speak a loyal word and be meanly silent, we cannot kill and not kill in the same moment ; but a moment is room wide enough for the loyal and mean desire, for the outlash of a murderous thought and the sharp backward stroke of repentance." \*

An appreciation of Browning's skill as an interpreter of such dubious or complex moods must be gained by repeated study of his dramatic monologues. We can here only attempt to indicate some of the main points in his teaching.

As life here is to be looked at as a preparation for life hereafter, and this world as the divinely appointed forcing house of the soul, experiences are important chiefly as they forward or retard the soul's growth. Joy is one element in the soul's development, for Browning's whole view of life is essentially the reverse of ascetic ; yet the more fully we develop all our faculties, the more inherently inadequate life becomes. It is through this very inadequacy that the soul is taught to set its affections elsewhere. In Browning emotion is one great agency in breaking up our narrow and complacent contentment. He teaches us to prize moments of intense feeling and aspiration—moments like that in which "Abt Vogler" was enabled through music to transcend our temporal limitations—as times of escape when the soul learns to breathe in a purer air. It is the mission of the artist, the supreme expressor and interpreter of emotion, to awaken such aspiration, and hence the necessity—according to Browning's view—of soul,

\* *Daniel Deronda*, vol. i. chap. iv.

and stimulus to soul, in the truest art. So, earthly love may prove, as in "By the Fireside," a high emotion which shall forward the soul's progress ; and so, too, as in "Youth and Art," the sacrifice of it to sordid ambition may stunt the spiritual progress of two lives. Browning is thus not only original and daring in method, but in aim ; and whatever we may think of the poetic quality of his work, his view of life is the most spiritual and stimulating of any English poet, not excepting Milton.

The great mass of Browning's work makes any more specific criticism of it impossible here. It is doubtful whether in any one of Browning's dramas he really meets the requirements of the stage ; yet, while he is not a dramatist, a large proportion of his poems, monologues, idyls, or lyrics, are as distinctly dramatic in spirit as in form. As closet dramas his plays have conspicuous merit, but as a rule his best work is found in his shorter poems. *Men and Women* (1855) contains many of the best of these, but characteristic masterpieces are scattered through his books, down to "Rephan" in *Asolando* (1889). *The Ring and the Book* (1868), a huge psychological epic of more than twenty-one thousand lines, remains, after all deductions, one of the most considerable and surprising poetic achievements of the century. We have spoken of this poem as an epic, but only for lack of an exacter word ; in reality it is rather a series of dramatic monologues in which the same story is retold by different speakers ; it is epic only by its length and by the underlying unity of its design.

Browning's  
work.



Browning's most ambitious, if not his greatest work, is thus a modification of his chosen poetic form.

With an intellectual force comparable to Dryden's, a moral ardor equal to that of Milton, Browning, too, is poet as well as thinker and teacher. He is no mere reasoner in verse, but the most profoundly passionate singer of his time. Through all his work there shines the noble spirituality, the marvelous subtlety, the strenuous earnestness of a great nature. Back of all stands the man, Robert Browning, who sings of himself in words which are at once an epitaph and a closing song of triumph, as

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake." \*

Thus in this great English poet of our own day we find that deep religious earnestness, that astounding force, which we noted in those obscure English tribes who nearly fifteen centuries ago began to possess themselves of the island of Britain. It is, indeed, this sound and vigorous character of the English race, underlying all the long centuries of its literary history, which gives a profound unity to all it has created. Browning's "Prospice," that dauntless challenge to death from one who "was ever a fighter," repeats, in its cadence and spirit, poetry that comes to us from the dimly seen and far-off childhood of our

\* Epilogue in *Asolando*, Browning's last poem.



race. If in the nineteenth century we have bartered and sold, and offered sacrifice to the Britannia of the market-place, it is still true that the great problems of existence have never been dwelt on with more earnestness, that the greatest voices of the literature have called us with a new ardor to the eternal and the unseen.

Henry Morley reminds us that the opening lines of Cædmon's *Creation*, the first words of English literature on English soil, are words of praise to the Almighty Maker of all things. After reviewing in outline the long and splendid history of the literature thus solemnly begun, we find in the two greatest poet voices of our own day, Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning, the note of an invincible faith, an undiminished hope; we find them affirming, in the historic spirit of the English race,

"Thy soul and God stand sure."

## STUDY LISTS AND REFERENCES

### I. STUDY OF SEPARATE AUTHORS

**Macaulay.** (a) The essays on "Clive," "Warren Hastings," "Chatham," "Johnson," "Goldsmith," and "Addison" may be mentioned as among the many with which the student should be familiar. *The Historical Essays of Macaulay*, and *The Select Essays of Macaulay*, both edited with notes by Samuel Thurber, are strongly recommended for school use. A number of the essays can be obtained separately in Harpers' Half Hour Series. For study of Macaulay's poetry, Rolfe's edition of the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, with notes and introduction, will be found convenient.

(b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Trevelyan's *Life of*, 2 vols.;

Minto's *Manual of English Prose*; Matthew Arnold's *Mixed Essays*, p. 179; *Life of*, by J. Cotter Morrison, English Men of Letters Series; *Literary Studies* (Macaulay), by Walter Bagehot.

**Carlyle.** (a) The length of many of Carlyle's best books, and in some cases their difficulty, make him comparatively unavailable for study in an ordinary course. The following selections have been chosen from his shorter and more available works—*Essays*: "Burns," "Johnson," "Richter"; Inaugural address at Edinburgh, *On the Choice of Books*. The following works may be read entire or in part; *Heroes and Hero Worship*, *Sartor Resartus*, *Past and Present*.

(b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Bayne's *Lessons from my Masters*; A. H. Japp's *Three Great Teachers of Our Own Time*; Masson's *Carlyle, Personally and in his Writings*; Garnett's *Life of*, in Great Writers Series, and Nichol's *Life of*, in English Men of Letters Series; *Some Personal Reminiscences of*, by A. J. Symington; Minto's *Manual of English Prose*, for study of Carlyle's style; J. R. Lowell's *My Study Windows* (Carlyle); R. H. Hutton, *Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith* (Thomas Carlyle). For more extended study of his life, v. the *Carlyle and Emerson Correspondence, Letters*, and the *Reminiscences*, all edited by Charles Eliot Norton, and Froude's *Life* (4 vols. in all).

**Ruskin.** (a) *An Introduction to the Writings of John Ruskin*, by Vida D. Scudder. This is that very rare thing, a good book of selections. It contains introduction, biographical sketch, notes, etc., and is admirably adapted for class use when works can only be studied through extracts. *Sesame and Lilies* (fine in places, but full of exaggerations, false criticism, and inconsistency); *The Crown of Wild Olive*; *Lectures on Work, Traffic, and War*; *Time and Tide*; *Letters on the Laws of Work*; *Fors Clavigera*, Letters v. and viii.; *Modern Painters*, part iii. sect. 1, chap. xv.; "The Theoretic Faculty, *Ibid.*, sect. 2; "The Imaginative Faculty," chaps. i.-v.

(b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. *The Life and Work of*

*John Ruskin*, by W. G. Collingwood, 2 vols.; *John Ruskin: his Life and Teachings*, by J. Marshall Mather; *Records of Tennyson, Ruskin and Browning*, by Anna Thackeray Ritchie; *Preterita: Scenes of My Past Life*, by John Ruskin. A. H. Japp's *Three Great Teachers* (Ruskin); Bayne's *Lessons from my Masters* (Ruskin); *The Work of John Ruskin: its Influence upon Modern Thought and Life*, by Charles Waldstein.

**Matthew Arnold.** (a) STUDY OF WORKS—*Poetry*. "Switzerland—4. Isolation, 5. To Marguerite, 6. Absence;" "Dover Beach," "The Scholar-gipsy," "Thyrsis," "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," "Thistram and Iseult," "Sohrab and Rustum," "The Forsaken Merman." Sonnets—"Shakespeare," "Worldly Place," "The Good Shepherd with the Kid."

*Prose*. "The Function of Criticism," in *Essays in Criticism*, First Series; "The Study of Poetry," and "Milton," in *Ibid.*, Second Series; "Celtic Literature." Extracts from Arnold's prose, with admirable introduction, are given in Edward T. McLaughlin's *Literary Criticism*.

(b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. A brief sketch of life will be found in *Men of the Time*; v. also for biography A. Lang's article on "Matthew Arnold," in *Century Magazine*, 1881-1882, p. 849. "The Poetry of Matthew Arnold," in *Essays Theological and Literary*, vol. ii., by R. H. Hutton, and "Matthew Arnold," by the same author in his *Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith*. "Culture," a "Dialogue," in *The Choice of Books and other Essays*, by Frederic Harrison (a reply to Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*; v. also on same subject Shairp's *Religion and Culture*); Stedman's *Victorian Poets* (Arnold); "Matthew Arnold; New Poems," in *Essays and Studies*, by A. C. Swinburne; Forman's *Our Living Poets* (Arnold); Sharp's *Victorian Poets* (Arnold).

**George Eliot.** (a) *Silas Marner*. *Poems*, "Brother and Sister." (The above are suggested as appropriate for use of class. To select special novels for recommendation is obviously useless and inappropriate).

(b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. *Life of*, by John Walter Cross, largely compiled from George Eliot's letters, journals, etc., is the standard biography. For shorter lives, *v. Life*, by Oscar Browning, in the Great Writers Series, and that by Mathilde Blind, in the Famous Women Series. S. Parkinson's *Scenes from the George Eliot Country*, partly biographical, gives interesting description of her early surroundings, and traces their influence on her work; R. H. Hutton's *Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith* (George Eliot as an Author), also Hutton's *Essays in Literary Criticism* (George Eliot). Dowden's *Studies in Literature* ("George Eliot," and "Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda"); Lanier's *The English Novel* (passages on George Eliot). *The Ethics of George Eliot*, by John Crombie Brown, is a most interesting and important contribution to the subject, *v. also George Eliot's Two Marriages*, by Rev. Charles G. Ames.

**Alfred Tennyson.** (A) STUDY OF WORKS.—1. *Poems illustrative of Tennyson's life or art.* (a) "Claribel," "Nothing will die," "Lilian," two songs on "The Owl," "Madeline," etc. Compare these with Tennyson's later manner. Consider importance attached by him to technique. Look up state of English poetry in 1830. Tennyson's influence on form. (*V. Stedman's Victorian Poets.*) Compare early metrical experiments of Milton, etc.

(b) *Natural descriptions in Tennyson.* Poems suggestive of particular localities. "Mariana," "The Dying Swan," "The Brook," "The Miller's Daughter," and natural descriptions scattered throughout his work. For interesting study of this whole subject see *The Laureate's Country*, by A. J. Church (1891); *In Tennyson Land*, by J. Cumming Walters; "Lincolnshire Scenery and Character as Illustrated by Mr. Tennyson," *Macmillan's Magazine*, November and April, 1873-1874, and *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets*, by William Howitt; Phillips' *Manual of English Literature*, vol. ii.

2. *Tennyson's Theory of Art.*—"The Palace of Art," "The Day Dream (Moral and L'Envoi)," "The Flower," "The Poet," "The Poet's Mind." In connection with "The Palace



of Art" the whole question of the relative value of the moral or ethical, and the æsthetic elements in a poem or work of art can be appropriately considered. Cf. views of Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Ruskin, William Morris, and Browning; for latter, v. p. 412 *et seq.* Moral earnestness as a characteristic element in English literature; v. Leslie Stephen's essay on Wordsworth's Ethics in *Hours in a Library*, Third Series; *The Gay Science*, by E. S. Dallas; J. R. Symonds' article, "Is Poetry at Bottom a Criticism of Life?" in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, vol. ii.

3. *Tennyson as a Teacher.* (a) Ideas of democracy and social reform: class distinctions as a bar to marriage, etc. "The Gardener's Daughter," "The Miller's Daughter," "Locksley Hall," "Aylmer's Field," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," "Lady Clare," "The Beggar Maid," "Maud." Cf. Browning's "Youth and Art." (b) Political poems, "You Ask Me Why tho' Ill at Ease," "Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights," and "Love Thou Thy Land"; and in general for Tennyson's attitude to his time, "Locksley Hall," and "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After." Study in this connection: Reform agitations in England from 1815 to Reform Bill, 1832; *changes wrought by science*; social changes, Chartists, Corn Laws, etc. Cf. political attitude of Tennyson with that of Shelley and Byron. For effect of recent inventions compare with second "Locksley Hall," Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* and *Queen of the Air*, Frederic Harrison's essay on "The Nineteenth Century," in *The Choice of Books*. For Tennyson's use of science, v. Dowden's *Studies in Literature*; Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, lect. iii., iv.; Stedman's *Victorian Poets*, introduction; "Effect of Scientific Temper in Modern Poetry," two articles by Vida D. Scudder, *Andover Review*, September, October, 1887.

4. *The Idylls of the King.* The following *Idylls* are suggested as the most essential to an understanding of the design of the entire work: "The Coming of Arthur," "Gareth and Lynette," "The Holy Grail," "Guinevere," "The Passing of Arthur," "Epilogue."

5. *In Memoriam.* A Key to Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, by



Alfred Gatty ; Genung's *Tennyson's In Memoriam : Its Purpose and Structure* ; Davidson's *Prolegomena to In Memoriam*.

(B) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. A. Waugh's *Alfred, Lord Tennyson : A Study of His Life and Work*, is probably the most satisfactory biography of the poet yet issued. H. J. Jennings' *Alfred Tennyson* is shorter, but also good, and also Howitt's *Haunts and Homes of the British Poets*, and Phillips' *Manual of English Literature*, vol. ii. (Tennyson) ; *Records of Tennyson, Ruskin and Browning*, by Anne Thackeray Ritchie ; Dowden's *Studies in Literature* (for a most penetrating comparative study of Tennyson and Browning) ; Japp's *Three Great Teachers* ; Bayne's *Lessons from my Masters* ; Walter Bagehot's *Literary Studies* (comparison of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning) ; *Tennyson, his Art and Relation to Modern Life*, by Stopford A. Brooke (1894).

**Robert Browning.** (A) STUDY OF WORKS. I. *Andrea del Sarto*. (a) The situation ; it is a dramatic monologue. (b) The harmony of the situation with the spiritual atmosphere of the poem ; it is "a twilight piece." Other instances of use of "dramatic background," v. Shakespeare Study List, § 5 b. (c) The character of Andrea. A "half-man." The weakness which makes him constantly seek to shift the responsibility for his misdoings on fate or chance. All is "as God o'er-rules." Andrea has the kind of nature, the artistic susceptibility to sensuous beauty, joined with a lack of moral fiber and a weakness of will, which would make him a ready prey to such a woman as Lucrezia. (d) The character of Lucrezia. The skill with which it is shown reflected in Andrea's words and life. Her selfishness ; sordid love of money ; utter lack of feeling for art except as a money-making agency ; her treachery and duplicity ; her marvelous but unspiritual beauty. (e) The art teaching of the poem ; technical perfection insufficient for the production of the highest art. "A man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for." Art may suffer from moral flaws in the character of the artist. Cf. Tennyson's "Theory of Art," Tennyson Study List, § 2 ; Ruskin's "Theory of Art," etc.

II. *Cleon*. (a) The setting of the poem. As in "Andrea del

Sarto," the note is struck at the outset. Here it is a background of Greek beauty and grace worthy of Alma Tadema. ("The portico royal with sunset," "The lyric woman in her crocus vest," etc.) (b) Cleon the heir to all the treasures of Greek civilization. (c) Cleon's dissatisfaction with life arises from his finding it "inadequate to joy." Cf. the cause of dissatisfaction in "The Epistle of Karshish," and in "Saul" with that of Cleon. The argument for future life in these and other poems: (1) The inadequacy of this life implies another. (2) The misery of this life can only be reconciled with the harmonious design elsewhere observable in nature, by considering it as preparation for another.

III. *Other Poems.* As Browning is a difficult author at the first approach, the following poems, to be read in the order here given, are suggested as one convenient mode of access: 1. Love poems: "Evelyn Hope"; "By the Fireside"; "One Word More"; "The Last Ride Together"; "Love Among the Ruins." 2. Narrative: "Martin Relph"; "Muléykeh"; "Ivàn Ivànovitch"; "The Flight of the Duchess"; "Clive." 3. Art poems: "My Last Duchess"; "Andrea del Sarto"; "Fra Lippo Lippi"; "Pictor Ignotus"; "A Toccatta of Galluppi's"; "Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha"; "Abt Vogler." 4. Dramas: "Luria"; "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon"; "Paracelsus." 5. Immortality and Religion: "Rabbi Ben Ezra"; "Epistle of Karshish"; "Cleon"; "Prospice"; "Saul"; "A Death in the Desert"; "Christmas Eve," and "Easter Day"; "Rephan." 6. Longer poems: "The Ring and the Book."

(B) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Sharp's *Life of Browning*, Great Writers Series, is the best that has yet appeared. Mrs. Orr's *Life* (2 vols.) is longer and contains much information not to be found elsewhere; it is, however, unsatisfactory in its criticism of Browning's work, and unreliable in its statements as to his religious belief. Dowden's *Studies in Literature* contains one of the best and most compact statements of the central motive of Browning's poetry. Among the many Introductions to Browning, Alexander's *Introduction to the Poetry of Robert Browning*, and Symons' *Introduction to the Study of Browning*, may be mentioned.

## II. GENERAL NOTES AND REFERENCES FOR RECENT PERIOD.

1. HISTORY. For general history of the time to the accession of Queen Victoria, see Fyffe's *History of Modern Europe*, 3 vols., or, for general historical outline, Fisher's *Outlines of Universal History*, or Myers' *Mediæval and Modern History*, may be used. For England, Bright's *History of* (vol. iv. comes down to 1880); Spencer Walpole's *History of England since 1815*; Oscar Browning's *Epochs of Modern History*. See, also, for interesting study of English colonization, Seeley's *Expansion of England*; for industrial changes, Gibbins' *Industrial History of England in the Eighteenth Century*; for Parliamentary history, Spencer Walpole's *The Electorate and the Legislature*, in The English Citizens Series. For Victorian Age consult, also, McCarthy's *History of Our Own Times*, 2 vols., and McCarthy's *England under Gladstone*, also *The Reign of Queen Victoria*, edited by T. H. Ward, 2 vols., which contains a good chapter on Victorian literature.

2. LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM. For general literary movements of the time, Dowden's *Studies in Literature*, and Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies*, will be found especially helpful. A comparison of Elizabethan with Victorian poetry will be found in J. A. Symonds' *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, vol. ii. Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature* includes careful study of the increase of feeling for nature in English eighteenth century poetry; on this see also Stopford Brooke's *Theology in the English Poets*. For general survey of the literature of the period, Stedman's *Victorian Poets*, Henry Morley's *Literature in the Age of Victoria*, and Sharp's *Victorian Poets*. Mrs. Oliphant's *Literary History of England in the End of the Eighteenth and Beginning of the Nineteenth Centuries* is rather a series of short and critical studies than a history of the literary period of which it treats. Her more recent book on *Victorian Literature* contains much biographical information. De Quincey has many essays on the great authors of his time, and Bagehot's *Literary Studies*, 2 vols., will be found of value.

## APPENDIX





TABLE I.—ENGLISH LITERATURE  
(GENERAL TABLE OF THE FOUR PERIODS)  
I.—The Formation of the Language, 670-1400

THE BRITONS (CELTS)	Early Bards: Llwyarch Hen. Taliesin. Aneurin. Merlin.
1. Before the Norman Conquest.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Northumbrian Writers, 670-800 or 825. Beowulf (time and place of composition uncertain) is the oldest English epic poem. Cædmon. Bede. Cynwulf.</li> <li>b. The Revival of Letters in Wessex, 880-1066. King Alfred, 849-901. Dunstan, 924 or 925-988. (See Table II.)</li> </ol>
2. After the Norman Conquest (1066-1400).	<p>English. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to death of Stephen, 1154. "The Owl and the Nightingale." Popular Songs and Ballads. "Robin Hood" Ballads.</p> <p>Anglo-Norman. "Song of Roland." "Romance of King Alexander." "The Romance of Sir Tristrem," 1270 (?).</p>
Celtic (Welsh) Literature enters England	<p>Geoffrey of Monmouth's "History of Britain," 1147. Walter Map continues Arthurian Legends, Twelfth Century. Layamon's Brut, 1205. (See Table III.) Geoffrey Chaucer, and Union of English and Norman. Chaucer turns from French to Italian Literature, cir. 1372. Triumph of English language over French. (See Table V., "Chaucer's Century.")</p>

TABLE I.—ENGLISH LITERATURE (GENERAL TABLE)—*Continued*

II.—The Period of Italian Influence, 1400-1660

1. The Revival of Learning.
  - a. In Education.  
Colleges founded, Introduction of Printing, Greek at Oxford.
  - b. In Literature.  
Wyatt and Surrey. (See Table VI., "Revival of Learning.")  
The Elizabethan Period, { (See Tables VII. and VIII., "Rise of the Drama,"  
Shakespeare, and "Elizabethan Period.")
2. The Expression of Reformation in Literature.  
Puritanism.  
Milton, { (See Table IX., "Puritan Period.")  
Bunyan,

III.—The Period of French Influence, 1660-cir. 1750

1. Restoration to death of Dryden, 1660-1700.
2. The Augustan Age (Critical School).  
Pope, Addison, Steele. (See Table X.)

IV.—The Modern English Period, cir. 1750

1. The Reaction against the Critical School (or Augustan Age).
  - a. The New Sympathy with Nature.  
Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," 1725.
  - b. The New Sympathy with Man; Rise of Modern Democracy.  
The Influence of the French Revolution.
  - c. German Influence in Coleridge and Carlyle. (See Table X., "Rise of the Modern Literature," and Table XI., "Victorian Age.")
2. Recent Writers, 1830.  
Democratic Reforms, Advance of Science, Spread of Knowledge, Social Changes.  
Macaulay,  
Carlyle,  
Ruskin,  
Thackeray,  
Tennyson,  
Browning, } (See Table XI., "Victorian Age.")

TABLE II.—ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	LITERATURE OF NORTHUMBRIA.	LITERATURE OF WESSEX.
Settlement of English.	Literary Supremacy, 670 to cir. 800-825.	
Jutes in Kent, cir. ....449 } Saxons, ....477 } Angles, cir. ....547 }	Early poems of uncertain date, probably of Continental origin. "Widsith," the far wanderer. } "The Complaint of Deor." } "Beowulf."	
King Arthur, cir. ....520		
St. Augustine introduces Christianity into Kent. ....597		
Conversion of Edwin of Northumbria by Paulinus, a follower of St. Augustine. ....627		
Edwin defeated and killed by Penda the heathen. ....633		
Flight of Paulinus. ....633		
Reintroduction of Christianity into Northumbria by Aidan and other Irish Missionaries. ....635		
Foundation of Abbey at Whitby. 657 (?)		
Theodore of Tarsus, Benedict Bishop, and Hadrian land in England. ....668	Cædmon writes his "Paraphrase of Genesis, Exodus and Daniel," at Whitby. ....670-680	Aldhelm (656-709). Abbot of Malmesbury ..... 671
Biscop founds Monastery of St. Peter. ....674	Bæda "Ecclesiastical History of England" ..... 731	"De Laude Virginum." "Enigmata."
and St. Paul. ....679 (?)	English translation of St. John's Gospel, finished. .... 735 Cynwulf, b. ....cir. 720 "St. Juliana," "Elene" "Christ."	

TABLE II.—ENGLISH LITERATURE TO THE CONQUEST—*Continued*

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	LITERATURE OF NORTHUMBRIA.	LITERATURE OF WESSEX.
End of Political Supremacy of Northumbria.....685		
Egbert, Archbishop, founds School at York.....732	Alcuin (735-804), pupil of Egbert at York. "Lives of various Saints," Poems, Hymns.	
Egbert, King of Wessex.....802-836		Literary Supremacy of Wessex, 880-1066.
Egbert, lord of all England to the Forth.....827		Rise of Literature under Al- fred.....cir. 880
Raids of the Northmen.....789-866	Northumbrian literature and culture destroyed by the coming of the Danes.	Alfred translates Bæda's His- tory, Boethius "Consolations of Philosophy," etc., etc. "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" revised and improved at Win- chester.
Alfred, King of Wessex.....871-901		Asser (died 910). "Life of Alfred."
Peace of Wedmore.....879		Dunstan.....924-988
Edward the Elder.....901-925		Æthelwold.....908(?)—984
Æthelstane.....925-940		Ælfric. "Homilies".....990-994 Translation of parts of Old Testament.....997-999
Battle of Brunanburh.....937		
Eadgar.....958-975		
Dunstan becomes Archbishop of Canterbury and assists Monas- tic Revival.....960		
Edward the Martyr.....975		
Æthelred the Unready.....979-1016		
Invasions of Northmen renewed and continue for thirty-six years.....980		
Cnut, the Dane, King.....1017-1035		
Edward the Confessor.....1042-1066		
Harold.....1066		
The Norman Conquest.....1066		

# TABLE III.—FROM NORMAN CONQUEST TO CHAUCER

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	ANGLO-NORMAN.	ENGLISH.
William I., 1066-1087. Battle of Hastings, 1066. Revolt of English in the North, 1068. Lanfranc made Archbishop of Canterbury, 1070. English revolt under Eadwin and Morcere, 1071.	Chanson de Geste introduced into England. Lanfranc, (?)—1089. "Liber Scintillarum," 1080. Anselm, (?)—1109. "Cur Deus Homo?"	Peterborough version of the Chronicle begun cir. 1121. English Chronicle ends at Peterborough, 1154. Layamon. "Brut," cir. 1205.
William II., 1087-1100. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1093. Henry I., 1100-1135. English and Normans fight side by side against Robert, Duke of Normandy, at battle of Tinchebrai, 1106. Cistercians brought into England, 1128 (?).	CHRONICLERS: Florence of Worcester, (?)—1118. "Chronicon ex Chronicis." Simeon of Durham, (?)—1130. "Historia de Gestis Anglorum." William of Malmesbury. "De Gestis Regum Anglorum," cir. 1120. Odericus Vitalis. "Historia Ecclesiastica," cir. 1142. Henry of Huntingdon. "Historia Anglorum," cir. 1154. Welsh literature mixes with English: Geoffrey of Monmouth. "Historia Regum Britannicæ," 1147.	Orm. "Ormulum," cir. 1215-1220. "The Ancren Riwe," cir. 1225. Nicholas of Guildford. "The Owl and the Nightingale," cir. 1280. Metrical Romances: "Havelok the Dane." "Romance of Sir Tristrem," cir. 1270. "Guy of Warwick." "King Alexander." Robert of Gloucester. "Rhyming Chronicle," cir. 1300. Early Lyric, "Summer is icumen in."



TABLE III.—FROM NORMAN CONQUEST TO CHAUCER—*Continued*

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	ANGLO-NORMAN.	ENGLISH.
Henry II., 1154-1189. Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1162. Constitutions of Clarendon, 1164. Assize of Clarendon, 1166. Murder of Becket, 1170. Richard I., 1189-1199. Richard's Crusade, 1190-1194. John, 1199-1216. Loss of Normandy, 1204. Great Charter, 1215. Henry III., 1216-1272. Friars land in England, 1221. The Barons' War, battles of Lewes and Evesham, 1264-1265. Edward I., 1272-1307. War with Scotland, 1295-1296. Edward II., 1307-1327. Scots victorious at Bannockburn, 1314. Deposition of Edward II., 1327.	Giraldus Cambrensis. "Topographia Hiberniæ." Wace. "Brut d'Engleterre," 1155. Benoit de St. Maure. "Roman de Troie." Walter Map, (?) -1210. "Goliath Episcopus." "Launcelot du Lac." "Queste de St. Graal." "Mort Artus." Roger Bacon, 1214-1292 (?). "Opus Majus," 1268. Matthew Paris, 1220-1259 (?). "Historia Major." Michael Scott. "Musa Philosophica."	Robert Manning. "Handlyng Synne," 1303. "Cursor Mundi," 1320-1325. Michael of Northgate. "Ayenbite of Inwyrt," 1340.

TABLE IV.—HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE

Northern English.  Cædmon, cir. 670. Cynewulf? Bæda, 673-735.  Literature interrupted in North by ravages and settlement of Danes.	Midland English.	Southern English. Laws of Ethelbert, 600. Literary West-Saxon. Alfred, 880. Rhymes in Saxon Chronicle, 937-979. Ælfric, 1000. Wulfstan, 1016. Worcester Chronicle, 1043-1079.
<div>Old English, 600-1100.</div> <div>Cursor Mundi.</div>	Chronicle, 1123-1154. Ormulum, 1200. Genesis and Exodus, 1230-1250. Robert of Brunne, 1303. Mandeville, 1356. Wyclif. Translation of Bible, 1380. Chaucer, 1340 (?) -1400.	Layamon's Brut, 1205. Ancren Riwe, 1220 (?). Robert of Gloucester, 1300. Ayenbite, 1340. Trevisa, 1387.
<div>Middle English, 1100-1485.</div> <div>Early Scotch. Wyntoun, 1420.</div>	Lydgate, 1425. Caxton, 1477-1490.	
<div>Transi- tion.</div> <div>Middle Scotch. Dunbar, 1500. Lyndesay. James VI., 1590.</div>	Tudor English. Tyndale, 1525. Shakespeare's Works, cir. 1589-1613.	Edgar, in "Lear."
<div>Modern English, Since 1525.</div> <div>Modern Scotch. Allan Ramsay, 1685-1758. Burns, 1759-1796.</div>	Milton. Dryden. Addison. Johnson. Arnold. Tennyson.	Barnes, 1800-1886. Poems in Dorset dialect.

TABLE V.—CHAUCER'S CENTURY, 1300-1400

ENGLAND.		FOREIGN COUNTRIES.	
HISTORICAL EVENTS.	LITERATURE.	ITALY.	
Edward III., 1327-1377. Death of Bruce, 1329. Battle of Halidon Hill, 1333. Beginning of Hundred Years' War, 1338. Edward claims crown of France, 1339. Battles of Crécy and Neville's Cross, 1346. Gunpowder first used at Crécy. First appearance of Black Death, 1349. First Statute of Præmunire, 1353. Battle of Poitiers, 1356. Peace of Bretigny, 1360. Second renewal of French war, 1368. Richard II., 1377-1399. Uprising of Jack Straw, 1378. Wat Tyler's Revolt, 1381. Condemnation of Wyclif at Blackfriars, 1382. Suppression of "Poor Preachers," 1382.	Chaucer, birth, 1340 (?). Probably page to Lionel's wife, 1357. Taken prisoner by the French, 1359. "The Romaunt of the Rose" (a translation from the French), 1360-1365 (?). "The A. B. C.," The version of a prayer to the Virgin, from the French, 1366-1373 (?). "The Boke of the Duchess," an elegy on the Duchess Blanche, who died 1369. "A Complainte of the Deathe of Pitie," 1370-1374 (?). Employed on Italian Mission to Pisa and Genoa, 1372-1373. Meets Petrarch. Appointed Comptroller of Customs of wool, 1374. Sent on mission to France, 1378. Second mission to Italy, 1378-1379. "Complainte of Mars," 1380 (?). "Troilus and Cressida," 1380-1383.	Dante, 1265-1321. "Divina Commedia," begun about 1307. Petrarch, 1304-1374. Sonnets and Poems. Petrarch crowned at Rome, 1341. Boccaccio, 1313-1375. "Teseide," "Decameron," 1350. War between Florence and Pisa; English auxiliaries employed by latter, 1362. Artists: Giotto, 1276-1336. Taddeo Gaddi, 1300-1366. Brunelleschi, 1377-1446. Ghiberti, 1378-1455.	
	Lawrence Minot. Poems, 1350 (?). Poems on Wars of Edward III., 1352. Sir John Mandeville. "Travels and Voyages," cir. 1357 to 1371. William Langland, 1332(?) -1400 (?). "Vision of Piers Plowman." John Barbour, 1316 (?) -1395. "The Bruce." "Legends of the Saints." John Wyclif, 1324-1384 (?). "De Dominio Divino," 1376. Translation of the Bible completed, 1380. "Fifty Heresies and Errors of Friars." John Trevisa. Translation of Higden's "Polychronicon," 1387. John Gower, 1325 (?) -1408. "Confessio Amantis," 1393 (?).		

TABLE V.—CHAUCER'S CENTURY, 1300-1400—Continued

ENGLAND.		FOREIGN COUNTRIES.
HISTORICAL EVENTS.	LITERATURE.	GERMANY.
Death of Wyclif, 1384. Truce with France, 1389. Henry IV., 1399-1413. Persecution of Lollards, 1399.	<p>"Lines to Adam Scrivener," 1380-1383.                      "The Parlement of Foules," 1382.                      "The House of Fame" (unfinished), 1383-1384, and "Legende of Good Women" (unfinished), 1384-1385.                      The Canterbury Tales, 1385 (?).                      (Some of these tales were written earlier as separate poems and afterward included in the series.)                      Clerk of the King's works, 1389.                      New pension granted by Richard II., 1394.                      Additional pension granted by Henry IV., 1399.                      "Former Age," "Fortune," "Truth," and other poems, 1382-1399.                      Chaucer's death, 1400.</p>	<p>The Meistersinger.                      Artist:                      Hubrecht Van Eyck.                        FRANCE.                        Froissart, 1337-1410.                      Chronicles.</p>

## TABLE VI.—REVIVAL OF LEARNING. 1400-1540

ENGLAND.		FOREIGN COUNTRIES.
HISTORICAL EVENTS.	LITERATURE.	
<p>Henry IV., 1399-1413.  Battle of Homildon Hill, 1402.  Revolt of the Percies, 1403.  French descents on England, 1404.  Revolt of Archbishop Scrope, 1405.  Henry V., 1413-1422.  Battle of Agincourt, 1415.  Henry VI., 1422—died 1471.  Siege of Orléans, 1429.  Death of Joan of Arc, 1431.  Cade's insurrection, 1450.  First battle of St. Albans, begins Wars of the Roses, 1455.  Edward IV., 1461—died 1483.  Battle of Towton, 1461.  Caxton settles in England, cir. 1471-1477.  Edward V., 1483—died 1483.  Richard III., 1483-1485.  Battle of Bosworth, 1485.  Henry VII., 1485-1509.  Grocyn teaches Greek at Oxford, 1491.  Linacre at Oxford, cir. 1491.  Erasmus in England, 1497.  Henry VIII., 1509-1547.</p>	<p>Poets of Chaucer's school:  Oocleve, 1365 (?)—1450 (?).  "Gouvernail of Princes,"  "Lament for Chaucer."  John Lydgate, 1370 (?)—1460.  "The Falls of Princes."  James I. of Scotland, 1394-1437.  Imprisoned in England (1405-1424).  "The King's Quhair,"  Wm. Dunbar, 1460-1520 (?).  "Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins," 1507.  John Skelton, cir. 1460-1529.  "Bowege of Court,"  "Boke of Phyllyp Sparowe."  Sir J. Fortescue.  "Difference between Absolute and Limited Monarchy," 1450 (?).  Reginald Pecock, 1390-1461.  "The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy," 1449.  Sir Thomas Malory, middle of fifteenth century.  "Monte d'Arthur," about 1470, printed 1485.</p>	<p>Chrysoloras teaches Greek in Italy, 1395.  Council of Constance, 1414-1418.  John Huss burned, 1415.  Thomas à Kempis, 1380-1471.  "Imitation of Christ."  Savonarola, 1452-1498.  Gutenberg prints Mazarin Bible, cir. 1453.  Constantinople taken, 1453.  Lorenzo de' Medici reigns in Florence; under him revival of arts and letters, 1469-1492.  Artists:  Ghirlandajo, 1449-1494.  Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519.  Michael Angelo, 1475-1564.  Raphael, 1483-1520.</p>



TABLE VI.—REVIVAL OF LEARNING, 1400-1540—Continued

ENGLAND.		FOREIGN COUNTRIES.	
HISTORICAL EVENTS.	LITERATURE.		
Dean Colet founds St. Paul's School, 1512. Battle of Spurs and battle of Flodden, 1513. Wolsey becomes chief minister, 1513. Quarrel of Luther with Henry VIII., 1521. Henry VIII. resolves on divorce, 1527. Persecution of Protestants, 1527. Acts of Supremacy and Succession, 1535.	Caxton, 1422 (?)–1491 (?). "Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers," 1477. Ballads, <i>e. g.</i> : "A Geste of Robin Hode," 1475 (?). "Battle of Otterbourne." "Chevy Chase," cir. 1500. Stephen Hawes, 1483 (?)–1513 (?). "Pastime of Pleasure," written cir. 1506. Sir Thomas More, 1480–1535. "Utopia," 1516. Wm. Tyndale, 1485 (?)–1536. Translation of New Testament, 1525–1536. "The Practice of Prelates," 1530. Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1503–1542, and 1517–1547, Introduce Italian Sonnet. Roger Ascham, 1515–1568. "Toxophilus," 1544. Coverdale, 1488–1568. Translation of the Bible, 1535. Cranmer's Bible, 1540.	Rise of Lyric poetry. Vittoria Colonna, 1490–1547. Romantic epic rose under Ariosto, 1474–1533; his "Orlando Furioso," written cir. 1516, published cir. 1532. Rise of Italian Drama under Trissino (1478–1550), and Aretino (1492–1557). Machiavelli, 1469–1527. Prose works, "The Prince," written 1513. Copernicus, 1473–1543. Luther, 1483–1546. Publishes his ninety-five theses, 1517. Before Diet at Worms, 1521. Translation of New Testament. Diaz discovers Cape "Good Hope," 1486. Columbus discovers America, 1492. Cabot discovers American mainland, 1497. Vasco da Gama discovers sea route to India, 1498. First stone of St. Peter's at Rome laid, 1506.	

TABLE VII.—RISE OF THE DRAMA—1110-1566.

SOVEREIGNS.	
	<p>The first known dramatic production in England, the French Miracle play, "St. Katherine," acted at Dunstable about 1110.</p> <p>Institution of the Festival of Corpus Christi (1264) gave an impulse to performance of plays.</p> <p>Street plays or pageants first performed about 1268.</p> <p>Whitsuntide plays at Chester about 1268; probably in French at this date.</p> <p>East Midland play, "Abraham and Isaac," middle of fourteenth century.</p> <p>York cycle of plays about 1340-1360; earliest known MS., 1430.</p> <p>Townley cycle of about thirty plays belonging to Woodkirk Abbey.</p> <p>Coventry plays, cir. fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.</p> <p>Chester Whitsun-plays, "Fall of Lucifer," "Noah's Flood," etc., composed probably early part of fourteenth century; earliest MS., 1581.</p> <p>Morality Plays: "Play of Paternoster," probably in Edward III.'s reign. Oldest extant morality plays, "The Castle of Constancy," etc., in reign of Henry VI.</p> <p>INTERLUDES:</p> <p>John Heywood, 1506 (?-1565).</p> <p>"The Four P's," about 1520.</p> <p>Earliest extant regular comedy,</p> <p>Nicholas Udal, 1504 (?-1557 (?).</p> <p>"Ralph Roister Doister" (acted cir. 1531), (published 1566).</p> <p>"Gammer Gurton's Needle," by Bishop Still, about 1566.</p> <p>Thomas Sackville, 1536-1608.</p> <p>"Ferrex and Porrex," or the Tragedy of "Gorboduc," played 1561, printed in 1565.</p>
Henry V., 1413-1422.	
Henry VI., 1422; died 1471.	
Wars of the Roses, 1455 to 1485.	
Edward IV., died 1483.	
Edward V., died 1483.	
Richard III., died 1485.	
Henry VII., 1485-1509.	
Henry VIII., 1509-1547	

ENGLAND.			FOREIGN COUNTRIES.	
HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETRY AND PROSE.	DRAMATISTS CONTEMPORARY WITH SHAKESPEARE.	FRANCE.	SPAIN.
Edward VI., d. 1553. English Book of Common Prayer, 1548.	Tottel's "Miscellany of Uncertain Authors," 1557.	John Lyly, 1553-1606. "Euphues," 1579. "Alexander and Campaspe," printed 1584.	The Pléiade imitated classical models: Ronsard, 1524-1585. Du Bellay, 1525-1560. Baif.	Culmination of the Drama under Lope de Rueda, 1544-1567.
Mary, 1533-1558. Mary marries Philip of Spain, 1554. Persecution of Protestants begins, 1555. Loss of Calais, 1558.	George Gascoigne, 1536 (?)—1577. "The Steel Glass," 1576. Edmund Spenser, 1552-1599. "The Shepherd's Calendar," 1579. "The Faërie Queene," 1590-1596.	Thomas Lodge, 1558 (?)—1625. "The Wounds of the Civil War," printed 1594. Robert Greene, 1560-1592. "Groatworth of Wit," etc.	Daurat. Belleau. Pontus de Tyard. Jodelle, 1532-1573. "Cléopâtre," first regular French tragedy on antique model. "Eugène," first regular comedy. Foundation of philosophical prose by Montaigne, 1533-1592. Essays. Malherbe, 1556-1628. Poems.	Lope de Vega, 1562-1635. "The Star of Seville." "The Madrid Steel." Cervantes, 1547-1616. Plays and "Don Quixote." Part I., 1605. Part II., 1615.
Elizabeth, 1558-1603. She restores Royal Supremacy and English Prayer Book. Royal Exchange built, 1566. First public theater in Blackfriars, 1576. Other theaters in Shore-ditch: "The Rose" and "The Curtain," 1576-1577. Drake sails for the Pacific, 1577. Revolt of the Desmond's, 1580. Massacre of Smerwick, 1580. Death of Mary Stuart, 1587. Drake burns Spanish fleet at Cadiz, 1587.	Sir Walter Raleigh, 1552-1618. "A History of the World," 1614. Poems. Sir Philip Sidney, 1554-1586. The "Arcadia," 1590. "The Defense of Poesie," 1580-1581 (?). Richard Hooker, 1553-1600. "Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy," 1594-1618. Thos. Campion, 1540-1623. "Observations on the Art of English Poesy." Francis Bacon, 1561-1626. "Essays," 1597-1625. "Novum Organum," 1620.	George Peele, 1558 (?)—1598 (?). "King Edward I.," printed 1593. "Tale of Troy," 1589. Christopher Marlowe, 1564-1593. "Tamburlaine the Great," printed, 1590. "Dr. Faustus," 1604. "The Jew of Malta." Thomas Nash, 1564 (?)—1601. "Pierce Pennilesse." George Chapman, 1559 (?)—1634. "All Fools," 1599. "The Widow's Tears," 1612. Thomas Kyd. End of sixteenth century. "Cornelia," 1594.	"Les Juives."	"No Monster like Jealousy."

NOTE.—For Shakespeare, see "Table of Shakespeare's Works," p. 148.

TABLE VIII.—ELIZABETHAN PERIOD, CIR. 1557-1637—*Continued*

ENGLAND.		FOREIGN COUNTRIES.	
HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETRY AND PROSE.	FRANCE.	GERMANY.
Defeat of Spanish Armada, 1588. The Martin Marprelate Tracts, 1588. Revolt of Irish under Hugh O'Neill, 1598. Expedition of Essex in Ireland, 1599. Globe Theater, 1599. James I., 1603-1625. Parliament claims to deal with both Church and State, 1604. Gunpowder Plot, 1605. Expedition and death of Raleigh, 1618. Landing of Pilgrim Fathers in New England, 1620. Impeachment of Bacon, 1621. Charles I., 1625-1649.	William Warner, 1558 (?) -1606. "Albion's England," 1586. Michael Drayton, 1563-1631. "Polyolbion," 1613-1622. "England's Heroical Epistles," Samuel Daniel, 1562-1619. "Civil Wars between York and Lancaster," Poems. Richard Hakluyt, 1553-1616. "The Principal Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation," 1589. Translations: Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso," by Sir J. Harrington, 1591. Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered," by Edward Fairfax, 1600. Homer, by George Chapman, 1598.	Alexandre Hardy, 1560-1631. Pierre Corneille, 1606-1684. "Médée," "Le Cid," "Cinna." ITALY. Tasso, 1544-1595. "Jerusalem Delivered," 1581. "Rinaldo." Batista Guarini, 1537-1612, or "Pastor Fido." Vasari, 1513-1574. "Lives of the Painters." Artists: Michael Angelo, 1475-1564. Titian, 1477-1576. Tintoretto, 1518-1594.	Literature: Hans Sachs, 1494-1576. Poems. Paul Flemming, 1609-1640. Poems. Science: Grotius, 1583-1645. Kepler, 1571-1630. Artists: Rubens, 1577-1640. Van Dyck, 1599-1641.

## DRAMATISTS CONTEMPORARY WITH SHAKESPEARE.

Thos. Middleton, 1570-1627.  
"The Witch."  
Ben Jonson, 1573-1637.  
"Every Man in His Humour," acted, 1596;  
"Cynthia's Revels," acted 1600.  
Francis Beaumont, 1586 (?) -1616.  
John Fletcher, 1579-1625  
"Faithful Shepherdess,"  
"Philaster," 1608.  
Tho. Dekker, 1570-1637.  
"Canaan's Calamity," 1598.  
John Marston, 1575-1633.  
"The Scourge of Villany," 1598.  
John Webster, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.  
"The Duchess of Malfi," written with Dekker.  
"Westward, Ho."  
Philip Massinger, 1584-1640.  
"New Way to Pay Old Debts," 1633.  
John Ford, 1586-1640.  
"Perkin Warbeck," printed 1634.

TABLE IX.—THE PURITAN PERIOD, CIR. 1637-1674

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HISTORICAL EVENTS.	WRITERS OF PURITAN SCHOOL.	LATER ELIZABETHAN WRITERS.
<p>Charles I., 1625-1649.</p> <p>First Parliament dissolved, 1625.</p> <p>Buckingham impeached, 1626.</p> <p>Second Parliament dissolved, 1626.</p> <p>The Petition of Right, 1628.</p> <p>Murder of Buckingham, 1628.</p> <p>Puritan Emigration to New England, 1630.</p> <p>Hampden refuses to pay ship money, 1637.</p> <p>Long Parliament meets, 1640.</p> <p>Execution of Strafford, 1641.</p> <p>The Grand Remonstrance, 1641.</p> <p>Royalists withdraw from Parliament, 1642.</p> <p>Battle of Edgehill, 1642.</p> <p>Battle of Marston Moor, 1644.</p> <p>Battle of Naseby, 1645.</p> <p>Charles surrenders to the Scots, 1646.</p> <p>Scots surrender Charles to the Houses, 1647.</p> <p>Flight of the King, 1647.</p> <p>Outbreak of Royalist Revolt, 1648.</p>	<p>John Milton, 1608-1674.</p> <p>"Sonnet on Shakespeare" (first published poem), 1632.</p> <p>At Christ College, Cambridge, 1624-1632.</p> <p>"L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," 1632.</p> <p>"Comus," (acted) 1634.</p> <p>"Lycidas," 1637.</p> <p>Journey to France and Italy, 1638-1639.</p> <p>Marries Mary Powell, 1643.</p> <p>Prose pamphlets:</p> <p>"Tractate on Education," 1644.</p> <p>"Areopagitica," 1644.</p> <p>"The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," 1644.</p> <p>"Defense of the English People," 1651.</p>	<p>Lyrists:</p> <p>Thomas Carew, 1598-1639 (?).</p> <p>Poems, 1640.</p> <p>Sir John Suckling, 1609-1641.</p> <p>"Session of the Poets," 1637.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>Richard Lovelace, 1618-1658.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>Robert Herrick, 1591-1674.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>Edmund Waller, 1605-1687.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>Abraham Cowley, 1618-1667.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>Essays.</p> <p>John Donne, 1573-1631.</p> <p>Poems and Sermons.</p> <p>Sir Henry Wotton, 1568-1639.</p> <p>"Elements of Architecture," 1624.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>Robert Burton, 1577-1640.</p> <p>"The Anatomy of Melancholy," 1621.</p> <p>Izaak Walton, 1598-1683.</p> <p>"The Complete Angler," 1653.</p> <p>"Lives,"</p> <p>Wm. Drummond, 1585-1649.</p> <p>Poems, 1616.</p> <p>"Flowers of Zion," 1623.</p> <p>Giles Fletcher, about 1588-1623.</p> <p>"Christ's Victory and Triumph," 1610.</p>
	<p>Wm. Prynne, 1600-1669.</p> <p>"The Player's Scourge," 1633.</p> <p>Thomas Hobbes, 1588-1679.</p> <p>"Of Liberty and Necessity," 1654.</p> <p>George Wither, 1588-1667.</p> <p>Satirical Essays, 1613.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>Richard Baxter, 1615-1691.</p> <p>"The Saints' Everlasting Rest," 1650.</p> <p>"Call to the Unconverted," 1657.</p> <p>Andrew Marvell, 1621-1678.</p> <p>Poems.</p> <p>John Bunyan, 1628-1688.</p> <p>"The Pilgrim's Progress," 1678-1684.</p> <p>"The Holy War," 1682.</p>	



TABLE IX.—THE PURITAN PERIOD, CIR. 1637-1674—*Continued*

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	WRITERS OF PURITAN SCHOOL.	LATER ELIZABETHAN WRITERS.
Execution of Charles I., 1649. Battle of Dunbar, 1650.	(John Milton.) Secretary to the Council of State under Cromwell, 1649.	Phineas Fletcher, 1582-1650. "The Locusts," 1627. "The Purple Island," 1633. Wm. Browne, 1590-1645. "Britannia's Pastorals," 1613-1616. George Herbert, 1593-1633. "The Country Parson," 1652. Religious Poems. Joseph Hall, 1574-1656. Satires and Poems. Francis Quarles, 1592-1644. "Emblems," 1635. Sir Thomas Browne, 1605-1682. "Religio Medici," 1642. Wm. Habington, 1605-1654 (?). "Castara," 1634. Thomas Fuller, 1608-1661. "History of the Holy War," 1639-1651. "The Church History of Britain," 1655.
Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, 1654. Death of Cromwell, 1658. Richard Cromwell, Lord Protector, 1658-1659. Dissolution of Long Parliament, 1660. Proclamation of Amnesty by Charles, 1660. Charles II., 1660-1685.	Major Poetic Period: "Paradise Lost," 1667-1674. "Paradise Regained," 1671. "Samson Agonistes," 1671.	Jeremy Taylor, 1613-1667. "The Liberty of Prophesying," 1647. "Holy Living," 1650. "Holy Dying," 1651. Samuel Butler, 1612-1680. "Hudibras," 1663-1678. Richard Crashaw, 1613 (?)-1650 (?). "Steps to the Temple," 1646. Poems. Henry Vaughan, 1622 (?)-1695 (?). Sacred poems.

TABLE X. { THE FRENCH INFLUENCE, 1660-CIR. 1750  
{ BEGINNING OF MODERN PERIOD, 1725-CIR. 1830

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETS AND DRAMATISTS OF THE RESTORATION.	NEW SCHOOL OF WRITERS.	FRANCE.	GERMANY.
Charles II., lands at Dover, 1660. Puritan clergy driven out, 1662. Royal Society at London, 1662. Plague and fire of London, 1665.	Thomas Otway, 1651-1685. Plays. Nathaniel Lee, 1655-1692. Plays. John Dryden, 1631-1700. "Absalom and Achitophel," 1681-1682. Plays and Satires. George Farquhar, 1678-1707.	Allan Ramsay, 1685-1758. Poems, 1721. "The Gentle Shepherd," 1725. James Thomson, 1700-1748. "The Seasons," 1726-1730. "The Castle of Indolence," 1748. Wm. Collins, 1721-1759. Persian Eclogues, 1742. Odes, 1746. Thomas Gray, 1716-1771. "Ode on Eton College," 1747. "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," 1751. Oliver Goldsmith, 1728-1774. "The Bee," 1759. "The Vicar of Wakefield," 1766. Thomas Percy (Bishop), 1728-1811. "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," 1765.	Culmination of French comedy under Molière, 1622-1673. "Tartuffe." "Le Misanthrope." Pierre Corneille, 1606-1684. "Medée." "Le Cid." Bossuet, 1627-1704. "L'Histoire Universelle." M. Boileau Despreaux, 1636-1711. Racine, 1639-1699. "Phèdre." "Iphigénie." Lafontaine, 1621-1685. "Contes." Fénelon, 1651-1715. "Télémaque."	J. Gottsched, 1700-1766. Poems, 1736. Plays. Louise Gottsched (his wife), translated Pope's "Rape of the Lock," also the <i>Speculator</i> . Klopstock, 1724-1803. "The Messiah," Books I.-III., 1748. Odes and Dramas. Kant, 1724-1804. "Critique of Pure Reason," "Ethics." Lessing, 1729-1781. "Laocoön," 1766. "Minna von Barnhelm," 1767.

TABLE X. { THE FRENCH INFLUENCE, 1660-CIR. 1750 } *Continued*  
 { BEGINNING OF MODERN PERIOD, 1725-CIR. 1830 }

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETS AND DRAMATISTS OF THE RESTORATION.	NEW SCHOOL OF WRITERS.	FRANCE.	GERMANY.
William of Orange lands at Torbay, 1688. Flight of James, 1688. Declaration of Rights, 1689. William and Mary, reign, 1689. Battle of the Boyne, 1690. Queen Anne, reigns, 1702-1714. Battle of Blenheim, 1704. Battle of Ramillies, 1706. Battle of Malplaquet, 1709. Treaty of Utrecht, 1713. George I., reigns, 1714-1727. Ministry of Sir R. Walpole, 1721. George II., reigns, 1727-1760. The Methodists appear in London, 1738.	AUGUSTAN AGE. Joseph Addison, 1672-1719. "Cato" (acted), 1713. Essays for the <i>Tatler</i> , the <i>Spectator</i> , and the <i>Guardian</i> , 1709-1714. Richard Steele, 1672-1729. Essays in the <i>Tatler</i> , the <i>Spectator</i> , and the <i>Guardian</i> , 1709-1714. Matthew Prior, 1664-1721. "The Country Mouse and City Mouse", (with Montague), 1687. John Gay, 1688-1732. "Trivia," 1715. Daniel Defoe, 1661-1731. "Robinson Crusoe," 1719, 1730. Alexander Pope, 1688-1744. "The Rape of the Lock," 1712, 1714. "Essay on Man," 1732-1734.	Richard B. Sheridan, 1751-1816. "The Rivals," 1775. "The School for Scandal," 1777. Frances Burney (Mme. d'Arbray), 1752-1840. "Evelina," 1778. "Camilla," 1796. Wm. Cowper, 1731-1800. "Olney Hymns" (with Newton), 1779. "The Task," 1785. George Crabbe, 1754-1832. "Inebriety," 1775. "The Village," 1783. Wm. Blake, 1757-1827. Poetical Sketches, 1783. "Songs of Innocence," 1789. Robert Burns, 1759-1796. Poems, 1786. Wm. Wordsworth, 1770-1850. "An Evening Walk," 1793. "Lyrical Ballads" (with Coleridge), 1798-1800.	Malebranche, 1631-1715. "Recherche de la Vérité." Le Sage, 1668-1747. "Gil Blas." Montesquieu, 1689-1755. "Esprit des Lois." Voltaire, 1694-1778. "Edipe." "Henriade." J. J. Rousseau, 1713-1778. "Julie." "Le Contrat Social." Denis Diderot, 1713-1784. "Encyclopédie," with others, especially D'Alembert, 1717-1783.	Herder, 1744-1803. "The Cid," "The Idea of the Philosophy of History." Bürger, 1748-1794. Ballads. Goethe, 1749-1832. "Wilhelm Meister," Part I., 1795; complete, 1829. "Faust," Part I., 1808. Schiller, 1759-1805. "The Robbers," 1781. "Wallenstein," 1799. "William Tell," 1804. Jean Paul Richter, 1763-1825. "Titan," 1800. Romantic School: Augustus von Schlegel, 1767-1845. "Ion," (a tragedy). Poems and Criticism.

TABLE X. { THE FRENCH INFLUENCE, 1660-CIR. 1750  
 { BEGINNING OF MODERN PERIOD, 1725-CIR. 1830 } *Continued*

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETS AND DRAMATISTS OF THE RESTORATION.	NEW SCHOOL OF WRITERS.	FRANCE.	GERMANY.
Resignation of Walpole, 1742. Charles Edward lands in Scotland, 1745. Battle of Falkirk, 1746. Battle of Culloden, 1746. Battle of Plassey, 1757. Wolfe's victory on Heights of Abraham, 1759. George III., reigns, 1760-1820. Brindley's Canal over the Irwell, 1761. Wedgwood establishes Potteries, 1763. Hargreaves invents Spinning-Jenny, 1764. Watt invents the Steam Engine, 1765. Repeal of the Stamp Act, 1766. Wilkes expelled from the House of Commons, 1768. Arkwright invents Spinning Machine, 1768.	Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745. "The Battle of the Books," 1698. (Published 1704.) "The Tale of a Tub," 1698. (Published 1704.) "Gulliver's Travels," 1726. Samuel Richardson, 1689-1761. "Pamela," 1740. "Clarissa Harlowe," 1748. H. Fielding, 1707-1754. "The History of Tom Jones," 1749. "Amelia," 1751. Lawrence Sterne, 1713-1768. "Tristram Shandy," 1759-1767. George Smollett, 1721-1771. "Roderick Random," 1748.	Samuel T. Coleridge, 1772-1834. "The Fall of Robespierre" (with Southey), 1794. "The Ancient Mariner," 1798. Robert Southey, 1774-1843. Poems by Bion and Moschus (with Lovell), 1795. "Thalaba," 1801. "The Curse of Kehama," 1810. Sir Walter Scott, 1771-1832. Translations of Ballads, 1796. "Marmion," 1808. Waverley Novels, 1814-1831. Charles Lamb, 1775-1834. "Rosamond Gray," 1798. "Essays of Elia," 1822-1824. Thomas Campbell, 1777-1844. "Pleasures of Hope," 1799. "Theodoric," 1824.	Mlle. de Lespinasse, 1732-1776. Lettres. Saint-Lambert, 1707-1783. "Les Saisons." Bernardin de Saint Pierre, 1737-1814. "Paul et Virginie." Chateaubriand, 1768-1848. "Atala," "René." Mme. de Stael, 1766-1817. "Corinne," "Delphine." P. J. de Béranger, 1780-1857. Poetry.	Friedrich von Schlegel, 1772-1829. "History of the Poetry of Greece and Rome." Fouqué (Baron de la Motte), 1777-1843. "Undine," 1814. "Sintram," 1814. Transcendentalists : Fichte, 1762-1814. "Critique of all Revelation." "The Vocation of the Scholar." Hegel, 1770-1831. "Phenomenology of the Mind." "Works on Logic." "Philosophy of Religion." Schelling, 1775-1854. "Transcendental Idealism."

TABLE X. { THE FRENCH INFLUENCE, 1660-CIR. 1750 } Continued  
 { BEGINNING OF MODERN PERIOD, 1725-CIR. 1830 }

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETS AND DRAMATISTS OF THE RESTORATION.	NEW SCHOOL OF WRITERS.	FRANCE.	GERMANY.
Occupation of Boston by British troops, 1769.	Samuel Johnson, 1709-1784.	Thomas Moore, 1779-1852.		Schopenhauer, 1788-1860.
Beginning of great English Journals, 1771.	"Dictionary of the English Language," 1755.	Odes, 1800.		"Monograph of the Fourfold Root of the Principles of Sufficient Reason."
Boston tea ships, 1773.	"Rasselas," 1759.	Lord Byron, 1788-1824.		"The World as Will and Idea."
American Declaration of Independence, 1776.	"Lives of the Poets," 1779-1781.	"Hours of Idleness," 1807.		Heine, 1800-1856.
Battle of Camperdown, 1797.	Edward Young, 1681-1795.	Childe Harold, " 1812-1818.		Songs and Poems.
Battle of the Nile, 1798.	"Night Thoughts," 1742-1745.	"Don Juan," 1819-1824.		"Pictures of Travel" (prose).
Battle of Trafalgar, 1805.		James Hogg, 1772-1835.		
Death of Pitt, 1806.		"The Queen's Wake," 1813.		
Abolition of Slave Trade, 1807.		Percy B. Shelley, 1792-1822.		
War with America, 1812.		"Zastrozzi," 1810.		
Battle of Waterloo, 1815.		Poems.		
		Jane Austen, 1775-1817.		
		"Sense and Sensibility," 1811.		
		"Emma," 1816.		
		"Persuasion," 1818.		
		John Keats, 1795-1821.		
		Poems, 1817.		
		"Endymion," 1818.		
		Thos. De Quincey, 1785-1859.		
		"The Confessions of an English Opium Eater," 1821.		



TABLE XI.—MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD \*

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETRY.	PROSE.
Catholic Emanci- pation Bill, 1829.	Walter Savage Landor, 1775- 1864.	Walter Savage Landor, 1775- 1864.
William IV., 1830-1837.	Poems, 1795.	"Imaginary Conversations," 1824- 1853.
Lord Grey, Prime Minister, 1830.	Thomas Babing- ton Macaulay, 1800-1859.	Maria Edgeworth, 1767-1849.
Opening of Liver- pool and Man- chester Railroad, 1830.	"Lays of Ancient Rome," 1842.	"Castle Rackrent," 1800.
Reform Agitation, 1831.	Leigh Hunt, 1784- 1859.	"Popular Tales," 1804.
Parliamentary Re- form Bill, 1832.	"Juvenilia," 1802.	"Helen," 1834.
New Poor Law, 1834.	"The Story of Rim- ini," 1816.	Sydney Smith, 1771-1845.
System of National Education be- gun, 1834.	Thomas Hood, 1798-1845.	"Letters on the Catholics from Peter Plymley," 1808.
Victoria, 1837.	"Whims and Oddi- ties," 1826.	Essays, 1802-1828.
First Electric Tele- graph patented and used, 1837.	"Poems of Wit and Humor," 1847.	Leigh Hunt, 1784-1859.
Rise of Trades Unions, 1837.	Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1809- 1861.	"The Examiner," 1808.
Rise of Chartism, 1837.	Poems, 1826.	"Table Talk," 1850.
The Queen's Mar- riage to Prince Albert of Saxe- Coburg, 1840.	"Aurora Leigh," 1856.	Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1881.
Oxford Movement, began about 1833.	John Keble, 1792- 1866.	Translation of "Wilhelm Meister," 1824.
Sir Robert Peel, Prime Minister, 1841.	"The Christian Year," 1827.	"Sartor Resartus," 1833-1834.
Chartist Riots, 1842.	Alfred Tennyson (Lord), 1809-1892.	"The French Revolution," 1827.
Graham's Factory Bill, 1844.	"Timbuctoo," 1829.	Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800-1859.
Repeal of the Corn Laws, 1846.	Poems, 1830.	Milton (Essay on), 1825.
	"Idylls of the King," 1858-1886.	Essays, 1843.
	"Demeter, and other Poems," 1889.	"History of England from James II.," 1848-1860.
	Robert Browning, 1812-1889.	Edward Bulwer (Lord Lytton), 1805-1873.
	"Pauline," 1833.	"Pelham," 1827.
	"Men and Women," 1855.	"The Last of the Barons," 1842
	"The Ring and the Book," 1868.	"The Parisians," 1872-1873.
	"Dramatic Idylls," 1879-1880.	Benjamin Disraeli (Earl of Beaconsfield), 1804-1881.
	"Asolando," 1889.	"Vivian Grey," 1826-1827.
		"Endymion," 1880.
		Charles Dickens, 1812-1870.
		"Sketches by Boz," 1834-1836.
		"David Copperfield," 1849-1850.
		"Bleak House," 1852-1853.
		"Our Mutual Friend," 1864-1865.
		William Makepeace Thack- eray, 1811-1863.
		"The Yellowplush Papers," 1837.
		"Vanity Fair," 1847-1848.
		"The Newcomes," 1854-1855.
		John Henry Newman, 1801-1890.
		"Arians of the Fourth Century," 1838.

\* The position of an author in this table is determined by the date of his first publication.

TABLE XI.—MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD—*Continued*

HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETRY.	PROSE.
Ministry of Lord John Russell, 1847.	T. Lovell Beddoes, 1803-1849.	"Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ," 1864.
Downfall of the Chartists, 1848.	"Death's Jest-book," 1850.	Charles Darwin, 1809-1882.
Free Libraries established, 1850.	Sidney Dobell, 1824-1874.	"Journal of Researches," 1839-1845.
Death of the Duke of Wellington, 1852.	"The Roman," 1850.	"On the Origin of Species," 1859.
Crimean War, 1854-1856.	"England in Time of War," 1856.	"The Descent of Man," 1871.
Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, 1854.	Hartley Coleridge, 1796-1849.	John Ruskin, 1819.
Battle of Inkermann, 1854.	"Worthies of Yorkshire and Lancashire," 1836.	"Salsette and Elephanta," 1839.
Siege of Sebastopol, 1854.	Poems, 1851.	"Modern Painters," 1843-1860.
Fall of Sebastopol, 1855.	Arthur Hugh Clough, 1819-1861.	"Ethics of the Dust," 1865.
Peace made with Russia by the Treaty of Paris, 1856.	"The Bothle of Tober-na-Vuolich," 1848.	"Præterita" (begun), 1885.
Indian Mutiny, 1857.	"Dipsychus," 1862.	Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875.
Siege of Lucknow, 1857.	Matthew Arnold, 1822-1888.	"Village Sermons," 1844.
Massacre of Cawnpore, 1857.	"The Strayed Reveller," and other Poems, 1848.	"Hypatia," 1853.
End of East India Company, 1858.	"Empedocles on Etna," 1853.	"Hereward," 1866.
Jews admitted to Parliament, 1858.	Poems, 1855.	George Grote, 1794-1871.
Death of Prince Consort, 1861.	William Morris, 1834.	"The History of Greece," 1846-1856.
Gladstone, Leader of House of Commons, 1866.	"The Defense of Guinevere," and other Poems, 1858.	Herbert Spencer, 1820.
Parliamentary Reform Bill, 1867.	"The Earthly Paradise," 1868-1870.	"The Proper Sphere of Government," 1842.
Disraeli, Prime Minister, 1867.	Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882.	"Principles of Biology," 1864.
Mr. Foster's Education Act, 1870.	"The Early Italian Poets," 1861; republished as "Dante and His Circle," 1873.	"Principles of Sociology" (vol. i.), 1876.
	Poems, 1870-1882.	Charlotte Brontë, 1816-1855.
	Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837.	"Jane Eyre," 1847.
	"Rosamond," 1861.	"Villette," 1853.
	Poems and Ballads, 1866-1869.	"The Professor," 1857.
		Emily Brontë, 1818-1848.
		"Wuthering Heights," 1847.
		Elizabeth Gaskell, 1810-1866.
		"Mary Barton," 1848.
		"Wives and Daughters," 1866.
		Anthony Trollope, 1815-1882.
		"The Macdermotts of Ballycloran," 1847.
		"Barchester Towers," 1857.
		"Phineas Finn," 1869.
		James A. Froude, 1818.
		"The Nemesis of Fate," 1848.
		"History of England," 1856-1869.
		Charles Reade, 1814-1884.
		"Peg Woffington," 1852.
		"The Cloister and the Hearth," 1860.
		"A Woman Hater," 1877.
		Henry T. Buckle, 1822-1862.
		"History of Civilization in Europe," 1857-1861.
		George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans Cross), 1820-1881.
		"Scenes of Clerical Life," 1858.

TABLE XI.—MODERN ENGLISH PERIOD—*Continued*

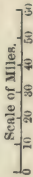
HISTORICAL EVENTS.	POETRY.	PROSE.
Victoria, Empress of India, 1876.	Henry Austin Dobson, 1840.	"Romola," 1863.
Outbreak of Zulu War, 1879.	"Vignettes in Rhyme," 1873.	"Middlemarch," 1871-1872.
Gladstone, Prime Minister, 1880.	"Proverbs in Porce-lain," 1877.	"Daniel Deronda," 1876.
Bill for "Representation of the People," 1885.	"At the Sign of the Lyre," 1885.	Essays, 1883.
	James Thomson, 1834-1882.	Matthew Arnold, 1822-1888.
	"The City of Dreadful Night," 1874.	"Essays in Criticism," 1865-1888.
	"Vane's Story," 1881.	Mixed Essays, 1879.
	Andrew Lang, 1844.	Irish Essays, 1882.
	"Ballads in Blue China," 1880.	William Edward Lecky, 1838.
	"Rhymes à la Mode," 1885.	"History of Rationalism in Europe," 1865.
	Sir Edwin Arnold, 1832.	"History of England in the Eighteenth Century," 1878.
	"The Light of Asia," 1879.	Richard Blackmore, 1825.
	William Watson, 1844.	"Lorna Doone," 1869.
	"The Prince's Quest," 1880.	Leslie Stephen, 1832.
	"Wordsworth's Grave," 1889.	"The Playground of Europe," 1871.
	Poems, 1892.	"Hours in a Library," 1874-1879.
		Walter Pater, 1839-1894.
		"Studies in the Renaissance," 1873.
		"Appreciations," 1889.
		John Richard Greene, 1837-1883.
		"A Short History of the English People," 1874.
		"The Making of England," 1882.
		William Stubbs (Bishop of Oxford), 1825.
		"Constitutional History of England," 1874-1878.
		Robert Louis Stevenson, 1845.
		"Virginibus Puerisque," 1881.
		"Kidnapped," 1886.
		"The Master of Ballantrae," 1889.







Some Literary Landmarks  
IN  
ENGLAND.







## LIST OF AUTHORS TO ACCOMPANY LITERARY MAP

The following is a list of some of the most representative men in English literature. By referring to the accompanying map, the student will be able to find their birthplaces as well as some of the localities in which they have lived. Where the names of the smaller places have been omitted on the map, the county in which they are situated can be found from the following list, and their general situation on the map approximately determined.

**Addison**, Joseph, b. Millston, Wilts, l. London.  
Alfred, King, b. Wantage, Berks, l. Winchester, Hants.  
Arthurian Legends, chiefly located in Cornwall.

**Bacon**, Francis (Lord St. Albans), b. London, l. St. Albans, Hertford.

Bede, or Bæda, b. Monkwearmouth, Durham, l. Jarrow, Northumberland.

Beaumont, Francis, b. Grace-Dieu, Leicester.

Blake, Wm., b. and l. London.

Browne, Sir Thomas, b. and l. London.

Browning, Robert, b. and l. London.

Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, b. Durham, l. London.

Bunyan, John, b. Elstow, near Bedford, Bedfordshire.

Butler, Samuel, b. Strensham, Worcester.

Burns, Robert, b. near Ayr, Ayrshire, Scotland.

Byron, Lord George Gordon, b. London, l. Newstead Abbey, Nottingham.

**Cædmon**, b. (?), l. Whitby, York.

Carlyle, Thomas, b. Ecclefechan, near Annan, Scotland.

Chatterton, Thomas, b. Bristol, Gloucester.

Chaucer, Geoffrey, b. and l. London.

Clough, Arthur Hugh, b. Liverpool, Lancashire.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, b. Ottery-St.-Mary, Devon, l. Keswick, Cumberland (Lake Country):

Collins, Wm., b. Chichester, Sussex.

Cowley, Abraham, b. and l. London.

Cowper, Wm., b. Great Berkhamstead, Hertford, l. Olney, Bucks.

Crabbe, George, b. Aldborough, Suffolk.

Crashaw, Richard, b. and l. London.

**Dekker**, Thomas, b. and l. London.

De Quincey, Thomas, b. near Manchester, l. Grasmere, Westmoreland (Lake Country).

Dickens, Charles, b. Landport, Hampshire.

Donne, John, b. and l. London.

Drummond, Wm., b. Hawthornden, near Edinburgh.

Dryden, John, b. Aldwinkle, All Saints, Northampton, l. London.

**Eliot**, George (Mary Ann Evans Cross), b. Coventry, Warwick.

**Fielding**, Henry, b. Sharpham Park, Somerset.

Fletcher, John, b. Northampton, l. Ryeland, Sussex.

**Gay**, John, b. Frithelstock, Devon, l. Barnstaple, Devon.

Gray, Thomas, b. London, l. Stoke Pogis, Bucks.

**Habington**, Wm., b. Hendlip, near Worcester, Worcestershire.

Hall, Joseph, b. Bristow Park, Leicestershire.

Herbert, George, b. near Montgomery, Shropshire, l. Bemerton, near Salisbury.

Herrick, Robert, b. London, l. Dean's Prior, Devon.

Hogg, James, b. Ettrick, Selkirkshire, Scotland.

Howard, Henry (Earl of Surrey), b. (?) l. Surrey, Sussex.

**Johnson**, Samuel, b. Lichfield, Stafford, l. London.

Jonson, Benjamin, b. Westminster, l. London.



**Keats**, John, b. and l. London.

**Lamb**, Charles, b. and l. London.

Langland, Wm., b. probably in Shropshire, l. Malvern Hills.

**Macaulay**, Thos. Babington, b. Rothley Temple, Leicester,  
l. London.

Marlowe, Christopher, b. Canterbury, Kent, l. London.

Marvell, Andrew, b. Winestead, near Hull, York, l. London.

Milton, John, b. and l. London, and Horton, Bucks.

More, Sir Thomas, b. and l. London.

**Peele**, George, b. (?), l. London.

Pope, Alexander, b. and l. London and Twickenham,  
Middlesex.

**Raleigh**, Sir Walter, b. Devon, l. London.

Ramsay, Allan, Lanarkshire, Scotland, l. London.

Richardson, Samuel, b. probably Derbyshire, l. London.

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, b. and l. London.

**Sackville**, Thomas (Lord Buckhurst), b. Buckhurst, Sussex,  
l. London.

Scott, Sir Walter, b. Edinburgh, l. Abbotsford, near Melrose.

Shakespeare, Wm., b. Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick, l.  
London.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe, b. Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex.

Southey, Robert, b. Bristol, Gloucester, l. Keswick, Cumber-  
land (Lake Country).

Steele, Richard, b. Dublin, l. London.

Suckling, John, b. Twickenham, Middlesex, l. London.

**Taylor**, Jeremy, b. Cambridge.

Tennyson, Lord Alfred, b. Somersby, Lincoln, l. Farringford  
House, Isle of Wight, and Blackdown, in Sussex.

Thomson, James, b. and l. Ednam, Roxburgh.

**Waller**, Edmund, b. Coleshill, Hertford, l. London.

Walton, Izaak, b. Stafford, l. London.

Wyclif, John, b. Hipswell (?), near Richmond, York, l. Oxford.

Wither, George, b. Brentnorth, Hampshire.

Wordsworth, Wm., b. Cockermouth, l. Grasmere and Rydal Mount (Lake Country).

Wyatt, Sir Thomas, b. Allington Castle, Kent.

**Young**, Edward, b. Upham, near Winchester, Hampshire.

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